

Not Your Grandma's Cinderella

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by [silverneko9lives0](#)

Summary

With the Prince Line about to die out, there was just one living heir, as much as Orion and Walburga despise it, they hadn't much of an option if the Princes were going to survive. So with an agreement between them and the last living matriarch of a once great family, they arrange a marriage.

As for Eileen Snape, it was only a matter of time before she snapped.

Notes

Deleted and Re-Posted as a Frame Story.

READ THE TAGS.

Nothing's really been changed except for how it starts, so it will jump between what's going on in 1975 and 1968 onward.

Chapter 1

~MAY 1976~

James nudged him with his shoulder. "How'd you like it?"

Sirius grinned. Getting detention was worth it, even if it was for the rest of the school year. He relayed this to James, who laughed.

"At the very least, you got some new wank material."

"Yup," Sirius agreed.

Severus, those silver boxers...he repressed a delighted shiver. Half of him wanted to just crawl on top of him and grind down. Especially given how he could sort of make the outline of his cock through them. Not to mention those long legs...

"Mate, you're drooling," James said, nudging him again.

Sirius blushed and wiped his mouth. "Sorry, Prongs."

"Don't worry about it," James said, wrapping his arm around Sirius' shoulders. "Severus knows it's just teasing." Remus sighed, shaking his head.

"I wouldn't be so sure," he said. James and Sirius turned to him. Sirius was confused.

"What'choo mean, Moony?" he asked.

"Just that, after a while, the teasing just builds up and gets more intense and what we're doing to him now is just bullying, isn't it? This was the worst of what you've done to him so far. What if you just, either today or before, pushed him to the breaking point and he chooses Regulus?"

James laughed. "You're kidding right? Reggie and Sev? C'mon, they might be in the same house, but Severus and Sirius are just meant to be. Don't pay attention to him, Sirius. He already chose you ages ago, I'm sure of it."

Sirius managed a smile. "Right," he said. *But if he did chose me...he hasn't said anything to me yet.* He glanced at Remus, who arched a brow.

You know he has the right to change his mind, he seemed to say.

"I'm going to make sure he's not still mad at us," he said, heading in the other direction. "I'll see you in a bit." With that, he ran, barely noticing the retort James sent to Remus about Sirius' anxiety.

He knows I love him. He must know.

Does he though?

Such thoughts plagued him on the way to the dungeons where the Slytherin corridor was. He knew it was a wall...somewhere...he'd been around here before to visit both Severus and Regulus, so his presence wasn't entirely...

A third year girl was about to enter, so Sirius called to her, asking her to get Severus for him. She

frowned at him, then went inside. A few minutes later—enough to make Sirius fear that he wouldn't emerge—Severus stepped out of the common room.

"What?" he said. Harsh enough to make Sirius almost wince.

"Just...you know it was just a joke, right? What we did?"

Severus' inhaled deeply.

"Sev?"

He turned around, as if to go back inside, then faced Sirius again. "I guess you deserve to know, and since you're here I might as well tell you now. I chose Regulus."

Sirius blinked. "What?"

"I'm going to ask Regulus to marry me when he graduates, Sirius. Okay?"

"But...I love you."

"Then why do keep hurting me? You've not been even a friend to me in the last five years and I really wish I understood why. I can't take you hurting me anymore, Sirius. This is it. I'm done trying to understand why you hurt me so much."

Sirius took his hands, breathing shakily. "Sev, I'll stop. I'll tell James to stop. Just...choose me. I loved you since we were kids. Don't...don't marry my brother. There's still time. Right? You're not seventeen yet, so there's time. I...I'm sorry, Babe."

"Don't call me that."

"Severus, please," Sirius said, unable to fight his tears any longer. "I love you, and I'm sorry. I'm a tosser, I get that, but I never meant to hurt you."

"But you did, Sirius. So many times. You'll find someone else, okay? You're free, think of it that way. You can marry whomever you want."

"I want *you*," Sirius said.

Severus pulled out of his grasp. "Regulus doesn't hurt me like you do. You know, I thought I would choose you, too, one day. I'm done hoping that you'd grow up and realize that what you take as just a joke hurts me. There's only so much abuse a person can take. That's why my mother did what she did."

"I know, but don't break my heart. Please."

"You broke mine long before today. Stopped being a friend ages ago and became someone I hardly recognize. Yeah, sure, you were the eight-year-old who was terrified of his father, but loved *The Hardy Boys* and *The Boxcar Children* so much he didn't care of the consequences as long as he could get his hands on them. You were the same kid that was always so curious about Disney that he snuck out to see *The Jungle Book* with me, knowing what could have happened if his parents found out. You were my first kiss and maybe you thought you might be in love with me then, Sirius, but you've not really been that kid in a long time. I'm not sure what happened to him, but once we started school here, you changed into someone I don't recognize. That child was someone I might've seen myself having a future with. But I've not seen that side of you in a long time."

Sirius bowed his head, still crying. He looked up again, hands lax at his sides. "Let me show you I've not really changed. Please, Severus. Give me another chance. I don't know how many you've given me, but please give me one more chance to show you I can be the man you want."

Severus exhaled. "No," he said. "I'm not going to do that. I made my choice, and I have to say thanks for making it so easy after today. I'm done. I can't love you, Sirius. Maybe one day, we can be friends again, but till then, I can't say even like you. I don't hate you. I did at first for a long time when you started being a complete wanker. Now it's just...numbness when it's you. Numbness and anger. I don't even feel afraid with Regulus as I do now with you when you and your friends corner me."

Sirius leaned against the wall, defeated. He couldn't even speak for the thickness in his throat made it difficult to even *breathe*. Perhaps if Severus kissed him once more...He didn't, though, reentering Slytherin common room. The door shut with a thud and then it was just a wall again. Sirius closed his eyes, focused on breathing and forced himself to move his legs so to get back to his dorm.

Once finally back in the common room, James and Remus approached. "Are you all right?" Remus asked. Sirius shook his head, fresh tears spilling down his cheeks. They went up stairs to their room and sat on Sirius' bed. Sirius hugged his pillow to muffle his sobs.

"What happened?" James asked.

"Remus was right," he said. "You were right."

"I didn't want to be," Remus said softly. "I'm sorry Sirius."

"Was it because of today?"

"Not just that. He told me it was before...I don't know when I lost him. I just...don't...James, Remus...I can't watch him marry Regulus. I can't..."

"Maybe if we leave him alone, he'll calm down enough to rethink it," James said. "He knows how you feel, doesn't he? Maybe he's just angry and wanted to hurt you like we hurt him today."

Sirius shook his head. "I don't think so. I hope so, but I don't think so."

Remus and James exchanged a glance. "Any ideas?" he asked.

"We'll need to talk to Lily. She's Severus' friend, so maybe she can help?"

"Well that depends on whether or not she'll want to. He did cross a line himself as far as she's concerned," Remus said. "So maybe I'll talk to her," he said. "She might not want anything to do with you two right now."

"Good idea." James patted Sirius' knee. "We're going to fix this mess, Padfoot. He'll reconsider it. He loved you before. He'll love you again before term ends."

"That's in two weeks, Prongs," Remus said. "That' might not be possible."

"We'll see," James said. He got off the bed. "I'm going to go ask Lily for help."

"I don't think Lily wants anything to do with you right now."

"This isn't about her and me. This is about Severus and Sirius, and getting them together." With

that, he left, feet pounding on the stairs. Remus shook his head.

“He’s insane,” he muttered. “But I think James sort of also feels responsible for Severus breaking up with you.” Sirius shut his eyes.

“He couldn’t break up with me if we never really dated,” Sirius reminded him. Remus squeezed his shoulder. “We were just childhood friends...the day we met...he was kind, patient, even kind of cute, back then. Sure, he isn’t much to look at now, but he was always so...Remus what if we can’t get him to change his mind about marrying my brother?”

“Give it a little more than a few hours,” Remus said. “You’ve been in love with him as long as we’ve known you. He used to give you the same look you have whenever we talk about him. I mean, dude, you’re crazy about him. I’m sure he knows that.”

The doors slammed open and Lily strode inside. James followed.

“So all this time you’ve been cruel to him is because you like him?”

“Love,” James corrected.

Lily sat on the bed. “Tell me everything, Black. All I’ve got right now is that you’re just an immature child pulling Sev’s proverbial pigtailed. If you want to fix this, I need to really understand what exactly is going on between your family and his.”

Sirius nodded, lowering the pillow. Lily’s sternness softened a bit and she summoned tissues.

~MARCH 1968~

The last straw was when Eileen found her son bloody and bruised after she’d gone out for groceries. Toby and a friend were drinking and laughing in the living room while Severus shivered in the corner of the kitchen. Eileen knelt down by him.

“Severus?”

He whimpered, shying away from her touch.

Eileen never considered herself a strong woman.

The way Toby treated her was...well, she had done what she could to fight, especially earlier in their relationship as he “tamed” her. He made her believe she deserved to be beaten, deserved to be raped, shared...

But this?

He never hurt Severus physically before. Never let his friends hurt him before.

She did all she could to ensure that the worst of the abuse was reserved for her.

But now?

She needed to get her son away. She clenched her hands into fists and the cupboards shuddered as her pent-up rage was released through her magic. Eileen stood and approached where her wand had been locked away. It slid open and she grabbed her wand.

With a wave, a meal was made fairly quickly, but she waited to serve it, quickly mixing one of the deadliest poisons she could create.

Severus remained in the corner, watching her with curiosity and fear. Once the poison was finished, Eileen dripped the clear liquid onto the food she'd made for the men in the room. She pressed her finger to her lips, warning Severus to remain silent and took the meal to the living room, wand left on the counter.

She ignored the men telling them she'd be back with more rum. She heard them tear into the food and moved through the motions of getting them more alcohol as they choked.

The doors burst open and Toby glared at her, pointing at his throat as vomit dripped out of his mouth. He fell, gasping and wheezing.

Eileen grabbed her wand and waved it.

"Pack," she said.

Her belongings and Severus' came down stairs, stuffed into one trunk before she approached her son and lifted him up. Toby collapsed, life stolen out of his body. Eileen pocketed her wand, and lifted the trunk with more ease than she expected.

Severus was long past the age of needing to be carried, but Eileen didn't care. Given his state, neither did he. Out on the street, she let go of her trunk long enough to stick her wand out, summoning the Knight Bus.

"I've an emergency," she said before the conductor could speak—if he could, given how stunned he was to see her carrying a battered eight-year-old. "I need to get to St. Mungos immediately."

Once settled, the conductor gave the driver instructions and they sped off to London.

"What happened to your boy?" an old witch asked, horror in her voice.

Eileen squeezed Severus a little tighter as if any chance of loosening her hold on him would allow him to slip through the cracks. "Monsters," she said.

The bus screeched to a stop and the Conductor grabbed the trunk for Eileen as she strode inside, shouting for a healer.

#

"He has multiple lacerations, a broken nose, the left femur is broken, four broken ribs, and his larynx is bruised. There is no other severe internal damage at this moment from what we can tell, though the damage from the injuries to his stomach could worsen, but we'll keep an eye on that... We'll give him a small dose of skelegro for the teeth that were knocked out. All of his injuries will be healed in a few more hours, but emotional and psychological damage could take longer," the healer said.

"Is there any damage that may relate to a...a sexual attack?"

"No," the healer said.

Eileen exhaled, relieved.

"Nothing of that matter happened from what we could tell. The worst from what I can tell thus far is what happened to his neck, but given a couple days, he'll be able to talk again." The healer shook her hand and walked away, allowing her a moment with Severus.

She took his hand in hers. “You’re going to be okay, sweetie,” she said. “Toby can’t hurt you anymore and we’re going to figure out what to do.”

Two knocks were her only warning before the door opened again. Eileen kissed his fingers and she turned to face the healer—

“Walburga?”

“I saw the name ‘Prince’ on this door and was curious,” she said. “It’s been a while, Eileen. I heard you ran away and married some *Muggle*.”

“If not for my son, it would be the biggest mistake of my life,” she said. “As it is, I love my child and am not ashamed to say that I would do anything for him.”

She didn’t want to tell Walburga that she committed murder just a few hours ago in the name of protecting her son.

Walburga hummed and approached the bed.

Eileen swallowed. “What of my parents? My brother?”

“Unfortunately, all dead. No heirs. Till now,” Walburga said. “Being half-Muggle, he isn’t capable of bearing, is he?”

“Of course not. Can we not talk about that in front of my child?”

Walburga brushed a strand of hair behind his ear and Severus flinched a bit. She clicked her tongue.

“Poor boy,” she said. “But you’re strong, I see. You’re Mummy and I will be out in the hall for a moment.” With that, the regal witch strode to the door and Eileen followed, shutting the door.

“What are you planning, Walburga?”

“Planning? Always so suspicious, Ravenclaws. You and your son are the last of the Prince line, so for that line to live on, your boy will one day must marry,” Walburga said. “Better yet to marry someone suited to his family’s legacy. Both of my sons can bear children and he’s the same age as my eldest, Sirius. And Sirius has begun showing interest in the male sex. A crush here, a longing there. It’s quite adorable. I think your son would be a perfect match. My youngest, Regulus, is seven now. What his preference is yet hasn’t been determined, but he is capable bearing children as well. Both of my boys are handsome and hale and strong in magic. I could tell that your son is the same. He’s not a squib, that’s for sure. Of course, we’ll let your boy choose which of my sons he’d like to marry, we’ve some years before we need really plan a wedding.”

Eileen crossed her arms, staring at the ground.

“Think of it,” Walburga continued. “The Princes and the Blacks: family at long last. As it always should have been. I will help you regain your wealth, your house, and your dignity, Eileen, if you agree. In fact, I’ll even pay for your son’s medical needs.”

“You would have me indebted to you.”

“Eileen, I’m indebted to *you*,” Walburga said. “If you had not run away and disgraced yourself, I wouldn’t be with Orion now. I used to hate you because you were his betrothed. But now, we have the chance what his mother desired: the union of our families. Your son will be able to carry on the

Prince line and whichever of my sons he does not choose will continue the Black line. Eileen, think about it at least. I will still pay for your son's medical bills as an act of good faith."

"I will need to think about it," Eileen said. "Three days? Severus is a child, but he is smart and given what just happened, I don't want him to think I'm making a decision for him."

"Of course. Meet me at Rosa Lee's for tea in three days." Walburga took Eileen's shoulders and kissed her cheeks. "If you'll excuse me, Eileen, I am needed at Regulus' bedside. Mumblemumps, poor boy. Ta."

Walburga strode past Eileen and once alone again, she sighed.

What do I do?

#

Severus remained silent even after his throat had healed, going into a state of muteness. The healer poked at his previous injuries, trying to gauge if further healing was needed. Assured there was not, he left and Eileen sat at the end of the bed.

"Sweetie, the woman who came in yesterday was an old school mate from Hogwarts," she said. "And she made us an offer that I want you to be aware of."

Severus nodded and crossed his legs, watching her carefully. Eileen sighed and told him her past, why she ran away, why she married his father at first, why she let him treat them so cruelly till the previous day, and what might happen next.

After that, she explained that some pure bloods, especially those so pure of blood that they have inbred with each other, can have sons that are capable of getting pregnant. She told him about Walburga's sons and how they had this ability.

Only then, once certain he really understood, did she explain Walburga's offer.

Severus blinked, staring at his feet.

"You have time to decide which of her sons you'd like to marry if we do this, but I don't want you agreeing without knowing what you're agreeing to. Walburga is still going to help us with your medical bills, and after that, we'll go from there..."

"I don't have to choose which of them I want to marry now?" he asked, voice croaky.

"No."

"But I'd have to marry them if we're going to survive?"

"You don't have to anything you don't want to do," Eileen assured him. "If you don't want to marry one of her sons, you don't have to."

"No, it's not that," he said, clearing his throat. "I...asked Toby about what being gay is like and I guess he assumed I was asking because I was one. But I don't know if I am or not. I should've guessed he and John would beat me."

"What they did was out of line."

"So is what you did, Mom," he reminded her. "You killed them." Eileen took his hand in hers. "I get why you did it, Mom, but I don't think most others are going to understand."

“No, they’ll understand,” she said. “But I will likely be punished for it anyway because you’re right. I killed them and I might get sent to prison for that regardless of the reason.”

“If you think about it logically—”

“No. Honey, this isn’t about being logical or rational. It’s okay to act on your emotions.”

Severus swallowed. “I don’t know what I feel about it. I can’t even *think* about getting married to even a girl, let alone another boy, even one who can get pregnant or imagine having children myself. I think...I think if I’m feeling anything, it’s nervous or anxious. But even then isn’t it better to marry someone you know? And when we’re old enough, maybe I’ll know which one of them I want to marry, right?”

“Right.”

He sniffed. “I’ll do it, Mom.”

“You understand that you can’t allow yourself to be tempted by another if we do agree, right?”

Severus nodded. Eileen embraced him. “Honey, I’m sorry,” she said. “I wish I was stronger.” She kissed the top of his head and excused herself. Walburga walked toward her and smiled.

“Eileen.”

“We’ll do it,” she said. Walburga blinked. “He agreed to marry one of your sons once they’re of age.”

“Wonderful!” Walburga said. She embraced her. “You said his name was Severus, was it?”

“Severus Snape, though he might want to change it to Prince.”

“Severus Prince, Severus Snape, either way he is the sole, living patriarch of your line. Or will be when he’s seventeen.” Eileen hated the way this felt. She hated it when she was the one going through it and had vowed not to do it to her children if she could.

But here, her options severely limited, she was the one making the decision for her son, even if he told her he was okay with it.

“May I see him?” Walburga asked. Eileen nodded and followed her into the room. She stood to the side as Walburga embraced Severus and kissed his forehead.

“You’re a brave boy, Severus,” she said, “And a strong wizard.” She tapped her nose knowingly. “I can tell. You’ll make a fine husband for one of my children someday.” She kissed his cheek and then Eileen’s before leaving.

Mother and son glanced at each other. Severus bit his lip.

“Did I make the right decision?”

“I don’t know,” Eileen said. “But I do hope so, sweetheart.”

#

It was nearly a week since the Eileen killed her husband.

So far, there was no indication that she would be arrested, but perhaps it would be a matter of time before anyone did notice. Or perhaps only Muggles were looking for her and Severus. She couldn’t

be sure, but she couldn't let Severus be the only other one who knew.

For now, she remained free, drinking tea with Orion and Walburga as the boys became acquainted in the living room playing a game of Exploding Snaps.

Their house elf, Kreacher, laid parchment, two quills and two inkwells on the table. Orion snapped his fingers and one of the quills stood, tip to the paper. An inkwell opened and it dipped the tip inside before returning to the paper and writing in loopy script:

~UNIFICATION AGREEMENT OF THE PRINCE AND BLACK FAMILIES~

The quill set itself back in the inkwell and laid there. Eileen snapped her own fingers and the second quill and inkwell came to life. Now they could begin.

“Walburga explained her offer, Eileen,” Orion said. “And while I’m not entirely keen, I can see what she does in respect of your boy, so as agreed, we will aid you and your son in whatever you need, beginning with your house and wealth.”

The Black’s quill jumped back to the parchment and wrote:

In exchange of the Noble House of Black aiding the House of Prince reclaim glory and dignity, the first born son of the Prince family will wed a direct descendant of the Black family.

Eileen nodded. “I agree to that term and would like to add that if there are unforeseen events, such as death or if some way, somehow I am unable to take care of my son, I know he’ll be cared for by you two.” Orion nodded and Eileen’s quill added the clause.

“Severus will have to choose which of our sons he will marry by his seventeenth birthday,” Walburga added. Orion and Eileen agreed.

“They marry before twenty-one,” Eileen said. “And an heir doesn’t need to be conceived before twenty-five.”

And on it went: expectations of Severus, expectations for whichever son he chooses—to be applied to both until he chooses one of them, consequences of unfaithfulness and disloyalty...

Eileen hated it when her parents did this to her, and now she couldn’t help hating herself as she did this to her son, even if he had consented. She didn’t think Severus really understood what he agreed to.

In the end, Orion gave Eileen her family’s ring and they pressed the seals to the paper, binding the agreement. “I do hope you keep to our arrangement this time around, Eileen,” Orion said.

Eileen closed her eyes and sighed, placing the ring on her left forefinger. “I don’t really have many options anymore,” she admitted.

She glanced at the boys in the living room. It was too early to tell what would happen, but at least they were getting along...

For now.

Chapter 2

Severus won yet another round of Snaps, starting to get bored and offer to play another game. Chess? Perhaps something that the scowling boy (*Sirius*, Severus recalled) across from him was bound to beat him at? He just sort of felt sorry for him, was all...

Sirius messed up the cards and several began snapping randomly, causing Severus to jump back to avoid being burned.

"Gobstones?" Sirius asked.

"Sure," Severus said slowly.

Sirius jumped up and beckoned Severus to follow him up the stairs. "Mother told me that you'll marry me or my brother," he said once the adults were out of earshot.

Severus nodded. "I know," he said. "I have to choose which, though...I didn't...mean...well..."

Sirius harrumphed and grabbed the gobstone set.

"I'm sorry."

"Why? It's not like you wanted this any more than I did," Sirius set the box on the bed and sat down. "Since we don't really have much of an option, I'm okay with being friends."

"You're willing to do that?"

"You don't know my parents," he said. "I'd rather have nothing to do with them if I can help it, you see, but," he shrugged then invited Severus to sit down on the bed. Severus accepted, sitting stiffly on the other side of the box. "Well, what do you like to do?"

Severus bit his lip. "I like to read," he admitted. "I used to always go to the library back in Cokeworth when I could and just sit there till they closed, reading all that I could reach."

"Not much of a reader. But I like muggle stuff—don't tell my parents."

"I won't," Severus said. "You might like Roald Dahl or even C.S. Lewis."

"Who?"

"They're muggle authors," Severus said. "You might like to read their books. I've a couple back at the inn Mum and I are staying at. If you like, I could lend them to you. I also have a couple volumes of *The Boxcar Children* and *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*—"

"Sirius!" Orion shouted.

Both boys jumped down, gobstone set under Sirius' arm, and ran down the stairs.

Orion seized Sirius and pulled him to the living room.

"What is this?" he shouted.

"Exploding Snap," Sirius said. "We were gonna start gobstones—"

“Orion, it was an accident,” Eileen said. “There’s no reason to treat the boy so.”

He sneered at her and pushed Sirius down. He scooted back as another card exploded, burning the tip of his nose.

“Clean it up. And put the gobstones away,” he ordered.

Sirius mumbled a *yes sir* under his breath as he and Eileen argued quietly in the hall.

Severus knelt with him to help. “My dad was the same way,” he assured Sirius.

“Does he know about you being here?”

“He’s dead.”

“Oh.”

“I can’t say I’m unhappy about it,” Severus said. “The way he was is exactly what made me stay in the library most of the time anyway.”

He left it at that and helped as best as he could to rid the scorch marks. Once cleaned as best as they could get, they returned to Sirius’ room and decided to play gobstones there instead.

“How’d he die?”

Severus felt his heart jump in fear. “He was murdered. And that’s all I’d really like to say about it if you mind.”

Sirius hummed. “Okay. Sorry. I’ll stop asking.”

“Thanks,” Severus said. “So...I know you said you don’t like to read much, but have you at least a favorite story?”

“A couple,” Sirius said, managing a little smile. He winced and touched his nose. “Ow.”

Severus sighed and moved to sit beside him, looking at the injured nose.

“It just smarts,” Sirius mumbled, a blush bloom over his face.

“Is there a medicine cabinet in the bathroom?”

“A what?”

“A cabinet in the bathroom that has something to help it heal.”

“Oh, yeah, but we’re not allowed...”

“Come on.”

“Severus! My dad—”

“I don’t like him. I don’t like your mum much either. She’s just...” Severus faked a shiver. “I’ve not met your brother yet, but you seem bearable if nothing else. Why am I leading?”

Sirius grabbed his arm and pulled him into the bathroom. He opened the cabinet under the sink and rifled through the bottles till he found what he was looking for.

“What’s that?”

“A dab of dittany is enough for this kind of wound,” Sirius said.

He opened the bottle and dabbed a little on his finger before rubbing it on his nose and putting it away. The scorched nose was soon the same color it had been before. Sirius put the bottle away and exited the bathroom, pulling Severus out with him.

“Hopefully he doesn’t notice anything different.”

“I’ve a feeling you’ve done this before?”

“Yeah,” Sirius said. “I shouldn’t, but my family’s maddening, see? Thankfully you seem okay and your mum’s nice, I think, so I think I wouldn’t *mind* it if you end up choosing me, but we’ll see.”

“I suppose we will,” Severus said.

“Severus!” Eileen called. “We’re leaving now!”

Severus called back, informing her he’d be down in a bit. He turned to Sirius to say goodbye, but was stunned silent by a kiss pressed to his mouth. Sirius grinned.

“You’re not half-bad, Severus.” He said. “See you around.”

Severus nodded and ran, face far too warm for his liking.

#

Regulus was home now, most of the mumblemumps were gone and he wasn’t as sleepy as he was before, if Sirius had any right to say anything.

He sat with him and his parents as they explained the agreement they had with Severus’ mother. Regulus, ever the dutiful son, remained silent and accepting, but as soon as he and Sirius were alone, he began to cry.

“I don’t wanna get married! I don’t wanna be a parent! I don’t wanna!”

“No one’s been chosen yet,” Sirius reminded him. “And Severus just needs to choose which of us he likes best. He’s not that bad. Bit like me but quieter. Right now, we just have to get to know him, he’ll get to know us, and when he’s seventeen, he’ll ask one of us to marry him.”

“You seem okay with it,” Regulus said with a scowl. “You usually hate this sort of thing.”

Sirius shrugged. “He’s not like any of the other blokes that wanted to do this sort of arrangement, you know. He’s our age rather than already at Hogwarts, and he’s nice. Not like the other wizards we’ve met.” He held *Tales of Beadle The Bard* up to hide his blush from Regulus.

He didn’t necessarily feel bad about kissing Severus the other day. It was just an impulse. He wanted to kiss him, so he did. And it wasn’t a bad feeling either.

Severus had soft lips and the air that he sucked in during the kiss had tickled.

He didn’t know that a kiss could feel so good. Didn’t know he could feel like such a girl about it. He kind of wanted to kiss Severus again.

Maybe the next time, Severus wouldn’t look so scared afterward.

Maybe he'd kiss him back the next time.

Regulus pushed the book down, glaring at Sirius.

"You're red." He stated. Regulus grinned nastily as little brothers are wont to. "Do you *like him*?"

Sirius' blush deepened.

"Well, fine, you can have him. I'm not getting married. Period. Goodnight, Siri."

"G'night," Sirius mumbled. He hid his face in his pillow and kicked his pillow.

I think I do like him.

~MAY 1976~

Lily massaged her forehead.

"Black, you are an absolute wanker," she said. "You've loved him *that* long and treated him like shit and still expect him to want to marry you? No one would do that, childhood sweetheart or not. This will be difficult...but not impossible."

The boys stared at her. "You'll help?"

"I'll help, but it's not going to take two weeks. Make it a year. *However*, if he still isn't convinced, you'll have to let him go." Sirius nodded, drying his eyes. "Good. Drink some water and get some rest. We'll brainstorm ideas tomorrow after OWLs."

She stood and glared at all three of them. "Well, now that you know the damage you've done, you all are going to make sure this is fixed, especially if *I* have to play fairy godmother."

Lily spun around and left the dorm room. The door shut hard behind her, making all three of them wince.

"Well," Remus said. "I guess we'll have an interesting year ahead."

"I still think we could do it before summer," James said.

"Not even gonna try and make it work that way," Remus said. "Just...Let's just listen to Lily this once."

"I'm with Moony on this," Sirius said. "Not that I don't trust you, Prongs, but..."

"Right...my track records not all that great either."

Sirius buried his face in his pillow, exhaling. No matter how long it took, he would fix this mess he made with Severus.

#

The trio met Lily outside by the lake. She motioned the boys to sit with her.

"I've gotten a head start on what we can do to help Sirius and Severus get back together." She unfolded some papers. "First of all, the three of you are going to leave him alone for a while. He needs time to cool off after your last attack on him—and yes, Potter, it was an attack. Give it a few days at most and Sirius, use that time to write a love letter."

Sirius nodded. "James writes you loads—"

"And they're bloody horrid," she said.

James blanched.

"Note the latest," she picked up one of the square parchment and cleared her throat:

Lily,

You're eyes remind me of summer moss shining in the sun. You're hair is the fires untamed, enchanting and dangerous. You remind me of a Greek goddess, unbound and unhinged to mortal toils...

Sirius and Remus sniggered, and James shrunk where he sat.

"First of all, Potter: moss? Fires untamed? Unbound? Unhinged?"

She shook her head.

"I get you were trying to be romantic, so I'm not terribly annoyed, but the thing is this: I'm the sort who appreciates honesty instead of poetry. And if you *really* want to try poetry, Shakespeare will get you anywhere. And a bloke like Severus is way too smart to try that kind of shit on, Sirius, so I'd wait on the poetry until you're certain he's back to square one in his decision of who to marry."

She set the letter down and waved her wand. A quill and parchment came to life, floating in the air with one word at the top:

~BRAINSTORM~

"With starting with a love letter, you'll want it to be a neat and tidy script. Clean, no misspellings or grammar issues," Lily said. "Dicta-quills help in the way of spelling and keeping it clean. Grammar is another thing."

Sirius nodded.

"The point of the first letter you'll want to send Severus is going to be remorseful. You've been an arse, you feel like an arse, you've already told him you're sorry, but the groveling, Black, has just begun. Start there: put it to paper in such a way that shows that you regret what you've done, but don't deprecate or defend yourself. Heck, don't even try to explain why you did what you did, likely it'll sound like you're trying to justify what you did or qualify it. You don't want to do that."

"Well, it's a long list," he admitted. "That might be better not to go through it anyway."

Lily nodded. "Instead, after the initial apology, you'll want to say something along the lines of how he makes you feel. Saying I love you is grand and all, but in the end, they're just words. For instance, you might want to try something like this."

Lily handed Sirius a piece of parchment in her script.

"Mind you, that's just an example."

Remus and James read over his shoulder:

I know I don't deserve you and as much as I want to accept that, it's hard to think of you with another person even if that person is someone else I care for. I can say I love you, but my actions

have poisoned them to meaningless drivel. All I can do is hope one day you'll believe me again.

But if you would allow, I would like to reassure you that I appreciate your brilliance. You take my breath away when you smile, and when you laugh I'm elated...

"Wow," Remus said. "How did you write this without making it sound cheesy?"

James stared at the words with Sirius, thinking.

"Because I've gotten cheesy," she said. "I've gotten cheesy and I've gotten horrible and I've gotten some that made me chuckle. All I can say is that the better ones are more honest and humble than goofy or cheesy. It doesn't hurt to make someone laugh, but for now, the goal is for him to forgive Sirius. Sincerity and humility are his best friends right now."

"So something like this could work?" Sirius asked.

"Over time," she said. "I'm not a miracle worker. Don't be disappointed if he doesn't reply to..."

She trailed off, looking past them. The boys looked behind them to see Severus and Regulus walking together toward the library.

Sirius looked away and stared at his hands.

"We'll fix this, Sirius," James assured him, squeezing Sirius' shoulder.

Sirius hoped he was right. He looked at Lily.

"What else should I put in this letter?"

~SEPTEMBER, 1970~

Once their trunks were put aside, Sirius took Severus' wrist and pulled him onto the train. They found an empty compartment and waved at Walburga, Regulus, and Eileen. Once the train began moving, they shut the window and Sirius sighed.

"Finally away from them," he said. "No more Dad pushing me around. No more Mum snapping at me."

"At least till Christmas," Severus reminded him, sitting next to him.

"I might not do even that," he said.

"It's my mum's party," Severus reminded him.

Sirius groaned.

"Sometimes I wish I didn't like your mum so much," he said, leaning back in his seat, arms crossed behind his head. "But at least you'll be there, too, so I can't really complain."

"I just hope she doesn't put up mistletoe again," Severus said. "I didn't fancy much you pulling me under it and dipping me."

"Oh shush, Prince," Sirius laughed. "Kissing you is one of my favorite things to do. Granted, that was the first one in public."

Severus rolled his eyes, reading *Hogwarts A History*.

That particular kiss had been no different from the past ones, save that it was a little longer and a little too public for his liking. That aside, it wasn't any less pleasant than the others.

Sirius pulled the book out of Severus' hands and kissed him again.

"Give me my book, Black."

"Kiss me back first, Prince," Sirius said, using a bit of ripped parchment to mark Severus' page for him and then pouted. "I always initiate."

Severus rolled his eyes. "I don't initiate because I don't want you or Regulus to think I've chosen which brother I'm going to marry when I'm not even sure myself."

"Really? You think there's a chance you will want to marry Regulus?"

"I don't know. I won't know till I'm seventeen, Siri."

Sirius hummed, pulling his legs up and crossing them.

"I don't know why you're still so unsure," he said. "You and me spend more time together than you do with Regulus. So unless you've kissed Reggie or vice versa, I'm not too worried about my chances, Sev."

Severus huffed and cupped Sirius' cheek, leaning in for a gentle kiss against his elder betrothed's lips.

"Oh! Sorry!"

Severus pulled away, blushing madly.

The girl was already in her Hogwarts robes and had pulled her ruby red hair into a pony tail.

"I didn't mean to intrude, but everywhere else is full..."

"Don't mind us," Sirius said, hooking his arm around Severus' possessively. "I'm Sirius Black. This is Severus Prince, my betrothed."

The girl held her hand out. "Lily Evans." She sat across from them. "I didn't know Wizards and Witches were able to marry the same sex. It's not really done among Muggles."

"You're a muggle born?" Severus asked. "I'm half-blood. My mum's a witch."

"Best of both worlds," Lily said, grinning at them.

Not really, Severus thought. "Do you know what house you're hoping to get into?"

Lily's grin ebbed a little bit. "H-house?"

"There's four houses," Severus explained, grabbing his copy of *Hogwarts A History* and sitting beside her. He showed her the page on the houses, explaining their qualities.

"Personally, I'm thinking I'm more Ravenclaw or Slytherin," he said.

"Cool. What about you, Sirius?" Lily asked.

Sirius sucked in a breath, pouting and doing his best to seem as stubborn as possible. Severus

guessed he was being irrationally jealous. Lily was pretty, but there was no clause in the contract that stated he couldn't befriend others.

"Not Slytherin, but Ravenclaw would be okay," he said.

The door slid open again and two more peered in.

"Can we sit here?" the boy with glasses asked.

"Plenty of room," Sirius said, trying to hide how much he actually *didn't* like having more people around.

"Thanks," he said, pulling the other boy inside. "Name's James Potter, This is Remus Lupin."

Once another round of introductions were made, Sirius moved to the other side of the compartment to sit next to Severus again.

While the three intruders talked, Severus nudged Sirius.

"You're being silly," he said. "You know it's going to be either you or Regulus. So stop seeing everyone else as some sort of competitor."

"Sorry," Sirius said. "I guess I don't really like the idea of sharing you with other people." Severus rolled his eyes and kissed Sirius' cheek, unaware at the sudden silence.

"You'll have to get over it," he said. "We can't even be sure we'll be in the same house, Siri."

"Prince and Black, right?" James asked. "Aren't you that latest pureblood match that the Prophet still talks about every so often?"

Severus nodded.

"Problem?" Sirius asked.

"Other than that my parents say that arranged marriages are wrong, I've no real opinion of it," he admitted. "At least you two don't seem too bothered by it."

"Well, we aren't officially betrothed yet," Severus said.

"Might as well be," Lily said. "You're an adorable couple. If we become friends, be sure to invite me to the wedding," she said.

Sirius blinked and started to grin. "If we become friends, you're more than welcome," he said.

~JUNE 1976~

Severus quill slipped out of his hand, landing on the floor.

He looked around, glaring, but saw no one who could have done it. He growled and leaned down to pick it up. Once he stood straight again, he stared at a woven basket with a single rose tied to the handle and the petals changed color, shimmering to different shades.

In the basket were his favorite treats and an envelope with his initials:

S.P.

He had an idea who this might be from, and part of him was about to rip the flower off and crush it before tearing the letter as well.

But there was a chance, he reminded himself, that it could be from Regulus...not that Reg was exactly romantic, but there was a chance he'd put some effort into it...

Severus opened the letter and it jumped out of his hand, floating in the air.

Dear Severus,

I know you don't want to talk to me, and I accept that, but please listen:

I regret everything that I did. It was never my intention to hurt you or humiliate you. But as it cost me your love, I see now that I had been a poor betrothed.

Even though I know I may have lost you forever, I need you to know:

I respect you. I respect your strength and your brilliance. You're inventive and informative, and I love—loved—hearing you talk about this or that new spell you've invented or potion you've perfected.

And I am sorry that we've used them against you in a way that was hurtful. I am sorry that my friends and I acted so deplorably. We acted without thought and without reason.

But don't think for a moment that we meant to be malicious. That was never my intent. Yet, in the end, it was malicious and the cost ended up being one I didn't even think I would pay.

I hope you can forgive me one day and remember that I do, truly, love you.

Forever yours.

Sirius

The letter fell to the table, closed, seal broken.

Severus read the letter again, wondering what to do with it. He glanced at the basket again and rubbed the back of his neck.

Props for trying, he thought, debating what to do with it.

They were his favorite treats after all, but the rest of it...

He removed the treats—waste not, want not, after all—and tossed the letter and basket.

The rose and petals withered in their rejection. Severus rolled his eyes.

Dramatic wanker, he thought, opening one of the goober's blowing gum packs and popping it in his mouth, walking away from the trash bin.

Chapter 3

Sirius wasn't surprised or hurt that Severus threw away the letter. He was intent on making copies of his letters to Severus and keeping them either as mementos that he did try or as a gift if he succeeded in winning Severus back. Still, at least he listened to it (Granted, Sirius didn't give him much of an option) and accepted the treats.

He clicked his tongue and went outside where James and Remus were lounging by the lake.

"Well?" Remus asked.

"He got it," Sirius said, sitting on Remus' other side and slouched, sighing heavily. "Yeah, I think we did the right thing listening to Lily rather than you, Prongs, he's still mad at me."

"I think he's always going to be mad about what we've done," Remus said, "But at least you're trying to fix it." Sirius nodded, ripping at grass blades.

"Guys, say it doesn't work and he never forgives me, what do I..." Sirius swallowed.

"You do what Lily said: you let him go," Remus said. "You let him go and hope he has a good life with Regulus." James scoffed.

"Asking Siri to let Sev go is like asking me to give up on Lily."

"Hopeless, you are," Remus muttered, shoving James into the lake. James climbed out, sputtering. He cast a drying charm on himself and removed his glasses, glowering.

"Moony, what the fuck was that?! You're a fucking ass!"

"Does anything you do work with Lily?"

James spat lake water and shivered. "No, but—"

"Then shut up and let Lily do what she thinks will work for Sirius. If you don't, I'll push you in the lake again." James groaned and laid down on the grass.

"You're lucky, Moony, you aren't lovesick," James snapped.

"Lovesick? Lovesick suggests something else. Lust, on the other hand..." Remus nodded. "Yeah, I think what you two are, is lustful toward the person you claim to love. James, you don't really know Lily all that well, right? And you, Sirius, since when have you actually spent genuine time with Severus since we got sorted into our houses?"

James and Sirius glanced at each other then refused to look at Remus, silent.

"Yeah, I thought so," he said. "Prongs, Padfoot, failing to meet the needs of the person you claim to love is exactly why Lily and Severus aren't interested in either of you, well, anymore in Sirius' case." Sirius glared at him. "Damn, you look like you're going to bite me."

"I'm tempted to," Sirius said, pulling more grass out of the earth. "But it annoys me more that you're right. At least about me and Sev. Lily won't let James get to know her, so it's a little different for him."

"In a way, it is, but the point is not much different between your situation and his. You've both

been asses and they don't appreciate the treatment you've given them."

Again, Sirius and James fell silent.

"You know what, I'm going to take Lily's advice, too," James decided, sitting up. He pulled out his now dry glass cleaner for his glasses and put them back on. "So this time, next year, Padfoot, you'll have your man back, I'll have my girl, and maybe Moony will get a cute wolf-girl."

"Absolutely not," Remus snapped.

"Aw, Moony, you deserve love, too," Sirius said, embracing him.

"I'm fine as I am, thanks. Get off me, Padfoot!"

"Yes, Padfoot," James said, yanking Sirius off and shoving Remus into the lake. Sirius fell back, clutching his stomach as he laughed boisterously. Remus pulled himself up, glaring at James. Then he grinned and tackled him, shoving him back into the lake.

"Damn it, Lupin, you bloody lunatic!" James sputtered. "I just got dry."

"Should've thought of that before pushing me in," Remus said, smirking.

"You pushed me in first!" James laughed, pulling himself out of the lake and scrambling after Remus. Sirius watched them goof around, leaning back and grinning and feeling loads better than he had in the last week.

~SEPTEMBER 1971~

Sirius wasn't that interested in letting go of Severus' hand as they followed Professor McGonagall in the hall. She had them stop in the front of the school where a stool and ragged hat waited.

The seam split and the hat burst into song:

*"Oh, you may not think I'm pretty, but don't judge on what you see,
I'll eat myself if you can find a smarter hat than me.
You can keep your bowlers black, your top hats sleek and tall,
For I'm the Hogwarts Sorting Hat and I can cap them all.
There's nothing hidden in your head the Sorting Hat can't see,
So try me on and I will tell you where you ought to be.
You might belong in Gryffindor, where dwell the brave at heart,
Their daring, nerve and chivalry, set Gryffindors apart;
You might belong in Hufflepuff where they are just and loyal,
Those patient Hufflepuffs are true, and unafraid of toil;
Or yet in wise old Ravenclaw, if you've a ready mind,
Where those of wit and learning, will always find their kind;
Or perhaps in Slytherin, you'll make your real friends,
Those cunning folk use any means to achieve their ends.
So put me on! Don't be afraid! And don't get in a flap!
You're in safe hands (though I have none) for I'm a Thinking Cap!"*

The hall fell silent again and Professor McGonagall unrolled a scroll. "When I call your name, come up, take a seat and I will place the hat on your head," she instructed, picking up the hat. One by one, in alphabetical order, the new students approached.

"Black, Sirius," she called. Severus squeezed his hand and let go. Sirius approached the stool, sat

down and his eyes were blocked for a brief moment.

“GRYFFINDOR!!!” the hat shouted. Sirius removed it and went to join the Gryffindor table, feeling joyous. Granted, he probably would get in trouble, as most of his relatives had been in either Ravenclaw or Slytherin and it was...

Well, his parents were unlikely to see it as anything but *unacceptable* to have a Gryffindor in the family.

Still, he didn't care! Until he remembered that Severus didn't really have much of a good impression of Gryffindors. Well, perhaps this would change his mind.

Not long after, Lily joined the table, then Remus, and lastly James. Now they just needed Severus to be sorted into Gryffindor and—

“Prince, Severus.”

He approached and sat down. The hat barely touched his head when it shouted:

“SLYTHERIN!!!”

Sirius felt numb.

Slytherin?

All of their new friends were sorted in Gryffindor.

So why? Why did Severus get sorted in Slytherin? Weren't they supposed to be in the same house? They should be in the same house!

“I'm sure it'll be okay,” Lily said, patting Sirius' shoulder. “I know Gryffindors and Slytherins are like fire and ice, but I doubt they have to be.”

Sirius hoped she was right.

~JUNE 1976~

“You might as well be breathing fire,” James said.

Sirius glared at him.

“Chill mate, it was just a kiss.”

Sirius grunted, staring out the window again. They'd caught Severus and Regulus in the hall just before the train pulled up in time to see Severus lean down and press his lips to Regulus'. Since then, he'd been in a sour mood.

“Got all the chocolates,” Remus said proudly, sitting down beside Sirius. “Have a frog, mate,” he placed one of the hexagonal packages on Sirius' leg. “Still pissy?”

“Yup,” James said. “Then again, if it were Lily...yeah, can't say I would be taking it better than he is.”

“True.”

“Just remember to be nice to your brother, Sirius,” Remus said.

"I don't know if I can," Sirius said.

"Alas! He speaks!"

"Bugger off, Potter."

Remus patted Sirius shoulder. "Have some chocolate, Padfoot. You'll feel better. Not great, but better." Sirius ignored him, slumping further in his seat. "Man, Pads, if I didn't know better, you might've started bleeding."

"Wait, does that happen to wizards that can get pregnant?"

"Yes," Sirius said. "It can and no, I've not started that yet. Usually wizards who are capable of getting pregnant don't start menstruating till after they turn sixteen or so."

"Must be painful," James said.

"So I've been told," Sirius muttered.

The door slid open and he spied Regulus' reflection. "Hey, Siri," he said. "Um...James, Remus, can I talk to Sirius alone for a bit?" Sirius watched his friends leave, shutting the door behind them. "Um...are you...I guess it's stupid to ask, but are you mad at me? Because of Severus?"

Sirius ignored him.

Regulus sat across from him, fidgeting. "He's just mad at you, I think. I've not told him that I'd accept his proposal yet. Mostly because I know you love him. More than I do anyway." Sirius refused to answer, so Regulus continued: "I just wanted you to know where I stood, I guess."

"Sure, must be difficult when he snogs you," Sirius spat.

Regulus didn't answer. "So you did see that," he said after a few minutes of uncomfortable silence. "I'm sorry, Siri. I really am."

"What's worse about it is that *he* kissed *you*," Sirius said.

"I know."

"He only kissed me when I asked him to or when I kissed him first, so..." he shut his eyes, sighing shakily. "So what am I supposed to think about that, Reg? Have you ever kissed him before today?"

"Well, yes, we've kissed before, but...never like what you've seen earlier. Not...not publicly, that is."

Sirius opened them. "Was I just disillusioning myself? Thinking that he loved me?"

"No. He does love you," Regulus said. "I'm pretty sure Severus does love you, but he's mad and he's hurt. Once he's calmed down a bit, maybe he'll remember which of us he really wants. I know it's not me. It never was, so...I don't know what he's doing or if it's just unconscious or not, but..."

Regulus moved to sit beside Sirius. "I love you, Sirius. You're my brother and I don't want you to resent me because Severus is angry at you. I'm sorry you saw him kiss me, but I don't...I'm not sure I'm in a position to reject him. Not while he's mad at you."

They compartment fell taciturn again and Sirius bit his lower lip.

~NOVEMBER 1968~

It was actually quite rare to see the House of Black filled with so much laughter. It was perhaps the brightest Severus had seen it in the eight months since he and his mother left Cokeworth.

The Black brothers and their companions raced about and Severus, no matter how much he was told he belonged, couldn't help feeling out of place.

His mother and the other parents stayed in the kitchen as the children played.

Sirius skidded to a halt in front of him. "What are you doing?" he asked. "Come on, Sev. Come play with us." He grabbed Severus' hand and tugged lightly.

"I don't know..."

"What do you mean you don't know?" Sirius asked, frowning.

"I'm not really...used to this. Playing or being at parties or—"

Sirius sat beside him, linking his arm around Severus' and laying his head on Severus' shoulder.

"You don't have to be worried about that at all," he said. "We're just playing tag right now: perfectly all right to run around and go nuts. Also, Sev, I want to enjoy these parties while I can before they start getting boring. Okay?"

Sirius lifted his head and kissed Severus' cheek, hugging his arm then pulling him off the staircase.

"Now come on! SEVERUS IS IT!!!" Sirius shouted, letting go and running off.

He laughed as Severus finally joined in the games, quickly forgetting his nerves, laughing and shrieking with the other children until time became irrelevant.

When they were called to the dining room for lunch, Severus was grinning, out of breath as he sat beside Sirius.

Eileen kissed the top of his head. "Are you having fun, sweetheart?"

"Yeah," Severus replied, grinning up at her.

Eileen returned the grin, tucking a strand of his hair behind his ear as Kreacher set a birthday cake on the table in front of Sirius.

"Happy birthday, Master Sirius," Kreacher said, bowing low enough for his nose to brush the floor. The sentiment was repeated and Sirius blew the candles out.

Sirius grinned, bouncing in his seat as they cut the cake and passed piece by piece around the table. The adults then went back to the kitchen as the children ate.

"How much do you like sugar?" Sirius asked Severus, who blinked, swallowed, and set the fork down.

"Who doesn't? But why do you ask?" Sirius placed a large glob of frosting on Severus' plate. "Uh, thanks? I guess? You don't like frosting?"

“Love it, just wanted to share some of it with you.”

Severus felt his cheeks warm. “Thanks, Siri,” he mumbled.

“You’re welcome,” Sirius replied, kissing his cheek again. “You’re so cute, Severus.”

“Tone it down, Siri,” Bellatrix snapped, grabbing another slice for herself. “You’re fiancé’s going to burst into flame at this point.”

“I don’t know,” Narcissa said, leaning on the table. “They are a little cute.”

“Of course you’d think so, Cissy,” Bellatrix said, rolling her eyes. “Well, if you excuse me, I’m going back to the bores. Oh,” she scooped Sirius’ extra frosting off his plate and stuffed it in her mouth. “Happy birthday, Sirius.”

“That was mine!”

She retaliated by taking Severus’ as well.

“Kreacher makes amazing frosting.”

“You’re such a bitch, Bella!” Sirius shouted at her as she sauntered back to the kitchen.

“Language, Master Sirius,” Kreacher said. “Or else I’ll have to fetch Mistress.” Sirius glowered at Kreacher as he passed them. Severus patted his shoulder.

“There is plenty of cake left, and plenty of frosting too,” Severus reminded him.

“Yeah, but that was *yours*,” Sirius said, frowning. “I don’t like Bella much anyway. She scares me sometimes, you know?”

Severus looked at her silhouette in the kitchen. “Yes,” he said. “I get that feeling, too.” He took Sirius’ hand in his own. “Relax, okay? It doesn’t matter to me that she took the frosting. It’s insignificant.”

“You’re really not bothered by it?”

“No.”

“Man, now I feel like I’ve been a brat.”

“Well, you are spoiled,” Severus said. “And headstrong, but that doesn’t necessarily make you a brat.” Sirius stared at him for a moment, then grinned, returning the grip on his own hands, pressing his forehead to Severus.

“You know, I think I’m in love with you, Severus,” Sirius whispered, watching him turn red again. Regulus stuck his tongue out across from them, making faux-barfing sounds with a few of his own age-mates.

Severus swallowed, staring at his lap. “I think I might...well, I don’t know if I’m in love with you, yet, Sirius, but I care about you a lot. If anything, I think you’re my best friend.”

“Aw,” Narcissa cooed.

Severus wished they wouldn’t, but if Sirius wasn’t bothered by it, perhaps he shouldn’t be either. Heavy knocking up front at the door silenced them. Sirius and Severus watched Orion stride by

them. A moment later, he returned with an older man with a funny eye and a gnarled face.

“Eileen,” Orion called. Severus and Sirius watched as Eileen approached. The man stepped forward.

“Alastair Moody, Madam Snape,” he said. “Head Auror.” She sighed, shoulders dropping.

“Is this about my husband?”

“It is,” Moody said. “May we speak privately?”

“Library’s vacant,” Orion said, leading them upstairs. Severus followed with Sirius behind. Orion caught both of them around the middle. “Leave it be, lads.”

“Mom!” Severus called. Eileen excused herself and knelt down.

“We knew this might happen, Sweetie,” she said, cupping his face. “We were as prepared as we could be. You’ll be okay, Severus. No matter what happens next, you will be okay.” She kissed his cheek and embraced him before going back to Moody’s side and entered the library.

~JUNE 1976~

Regulus returned after several minutes, shutting the door to their compartment. He approached Severus and sat down across from him. “He saw us,” he said. Severus arched a brow. “I get your angry at him, Severus, but I don’t...it’s just weird for everyone, I think.”

Severus hummed. “I’m not angry,” he said. “I just don’t really know him anymore. Not like I used to.” Regulus pulled a knee up to his chin.

“I don’t like this, Sev. It’s sort of just been *known* that you and Sirius were going to marry. Everyone expects it, so I don’t know how this change is going to be received.”

Severus stood and sat next to Regulus. “It’s weird for me, too,” he said. “I thought the same for some time and I think a part of me is always going to love Sirius, but he’s not the same person I once loved.”

Regulus released his leg. “I just don’t want to accept your proposal as long as there’s a chance you’ll wake up one day thinking you married the wrong brother.” Severus wrapped his arm around him and kissed Regulus’ temple.

It was weird for him as well. It felt almost like he was romancing his brother. Granted, he knew that Regulus wasn’t his brother, so the sentiment wasn’t the same, but it *felt* it. “I feel the same,” he answered. He rested his chin on top of Regulus’ head.

“Then why not give him another chance?”

“Why bother?” Severus asked. “I gave him so many and he just didn’t pay attention to how he was acting, I just...I can’t. Even if he does change and grow up, I don’t think I can really forgive him for everything he’s done. Especially the most recent.”

Regulus hummed sadly. “I just don’t want to lose my brother in all this.”

“I understand,” he said, kissing his cheek and letting go. “I don’t want you to lose him either.”

It was a good day in London, if Lily had any say about it. The sun was out, she and Petunia were having fun shopping and now she was sneaking her sister into Diagon Alley to see if they can get her something cute from Madam Malkins once they got a money transfer from Gringotts and lunch at the Leaky.

She had gone to get them some books for herself while Tunie continued to get measured for her own robes. She couldn't get much, didn't have any magical gift, but this was the closest Lily could do to let her feel part of something she wasn't. Lily felt a tug on the back of her jacket and twisted around, ready to slam her fist into who grabbed her.

"Easy! Easy, Evans!" James said, letting go and backing off, hands in the air. "Didn't mean to scare you there. Sorry."

"Potter! What was that about?"

"I called your name, but you didn't answer."

"Oh," Lily said.

"I thought you lived in Cokeworth."

"My family's vacationing in London for a bit so my sister and I are spending time together right now. You?" James grinned, holding up a bag.

"Just some stuff from Zonkos for Sirius. Mate's in a bit of a slump right now. Figured a laugh might do him some good."

"Slump?"

"Been trying to write Severus a new letter," he said. "Add to it he's not himself and, well, I'm worried. He's my best friend and he just..."

Lily hummed. "In a slump and depressed?"

"Yeah."

She hummed. "He lives in the area, right?"

"In London, yes, but not this part of London. He lives in a more residential area, but we can floo him if you want. Maybe someone who can kick his butt could help."

"Well, I don't think kicking his butt is going to get him out of any slumps," Lily said. They stopped in front of Madam Malkin's and entered. "How's it going, Petunia?"

"Great," she said, grinning. "Thanks for this, Lily."

"You're welcome," Lily said.

"You look nothing alike! Evans, are you adopted or something?"

"Nope," Lily said.

"Classmate?" Petunia asked. Lily nodded.

"Petunia, this is James Potter."

“Oh, so this is ‘bloody wanker Potter,’” she said, arching a brow at him.

“The one and only,” Lily said with a bright grin. James placed his hand on his chest.

“You wound me, Evans.”

“After all the shite you pull, you’re lucky a wound is all it is,” she snapped. Petunia thanked Madam Malkin and placed the parcel under her arm. “You’re a bully, Potter, and I *hate* bullies. Especially fat headed jocks with no bloody clue of the effect of what they do.”

“Oh lord, a jock-bully?” Petunia asked. “Lily, I swear you attract a type.”

“That I can’t stand,” Lily said as they left the shop. “Be it rugby, football, lacrosse, *quidditch*, I swear they’re all the same! Absolutely horrid!”

“I’m right here, Evans. I can hear you.”

Lily sent him a deadpanned stare. “Well obviously, that’s sort of the point.”

Petunia linked her arm with Lily’s and knelt down. “Lily, I get your anger, but perhaps take it down a notch. Poor lad’s clearly besotted. Remember to take care not to become what you despise.” Lily winced and Petunia made her way to another shop.

“Erm…”

“Sometimes I wish my sister was more like that,” she admitted. “Petunia’s in a good mood today, so…well, she’s not a bad sister when she puts her mind to it.”

“I’ve no siblings myself, so,” James shrugged.

“I am sorry,” Lily said. “I don’t mind athletes much. It’s when they do things that are cruel—when *anyone* does things that are cruel that really gets under my skin and pisses me off.” James sighed and ran his hand through his hair.

“I get that,” he said. “You’ve always been a tough woman and I admire that. So, yeah, I’m mad for you and maybe I get carried away with it…”

“I sense a ‘but.’”

“Well, I wish it was a good ‘but.’ It just isn’t. I don’t have an excuse for the way I act. I just… knowing what it did to Sirius and how the aftermath is affecting his relationship with Severus I guess I’ve become more aware in a way that…what I do really does affect people in a way it shouldn’t. It was never my intent to break Severus and Sirius up so…”

He pinched the bridge of his nose, pushing his glasses up for a bit. “I didn’t even think it was possible for that to happen. Not to Sirius. He’s as mad for Sev as I am for you. And they’ve known each other long before we all met.”

Lily hummed. “I remember it. I really thought you were different, then, Potter. Same with Black, especially given how he pretty much hung on Severus’ arm,” she said with a smile. “It was cute, actually, how he just pouted and glared.”

“He was possessive to be sure. Grew out of that. Well, sort of. He’s still possessive of what he thinks is his. But then again he didn’t think he could lose Severus to Regulus.”

“Well, he didn’t. It doesn’t make much sense to me either. They’ve been friends since they were

eight and gone through some rather intense hardship—what with Severus’ mother going to Azkaban and all, but still.” Lily shrugged. “It’s said that everyone has a limit. Last May, I suppose Severus found his limit. Over all, if Sirius really wants him back, he’ll have to deal with his own soul searching and perhaps those slumps and depression is just a part of that. But,” she stopped outside a lemonade parlor, “if he manages to fix his relationship with Severus, even if they don’t get back together, but he fixes it, whoever has his heart next I’m sure he’ll treat better because he knows what his actions can do and how they can hurt even the people he loves, intentionally or not. I can give him ideas on how to fix his relationships with people he loves, but all in all, ideas and suggestions are all I can give.”

“Well, maybe you could help him out?” James asked. “Just get him to get some fresh air or something?”

Lily arched a brow. “I don’t know why I have to. He’s your best friend, Potter. *You* can get him to do that and unwind and maybe give him a little inspiration on what to write next. I gave him the tools. From there, it’s all his to act on.” She placed a galleon in the seller’s hand and handed a cup to James. “So be the friend he needs you to be, kick his arse as much as he needs it to be kicked, and maybe you’ll get there.” She took a swig. “Magic is grand and all, but I can’t make glass slippers or a silver ball gown in a matter of seconds, you know.”

James stared at her, quite confused. Lily grinned around the rim of her glass. “What?”

“Bibidi bobidi boo. Bye.” With that, she jogged to catch up to her sister and James was perhaps more confused at her last sentence than before.

“Bibidi bobido boo?” he shook his head. “Must be a muggle thing.”

Chapter 4

The Blacks were gone—well, by that it would be better to say that Walburga and Orion were gone—when James arrived.

Regulus allowed him to come through, wishing him luck in cheering Sirius up, and James jumped up the stairs to Sirius' room. He knocked and entered, bypassing permission to enter.

“Prongs?”

“Come on, you wanker,” he said, grabbing Sirius under his arms and pulled him out of the room toward the bathroom.

“Oi! I can walk on my own and I don't want to go anywhere!”

“Too bad. You stink. Take a shower and we're going to Diagon Alley.”

“But—”

“No buts or I will kick your butt,” James said, pushing Sirius into the bathroom and shutting the door.

He leaned against it, half expecting Sirius to pound against it. He did no such thing. Instead, James heard the shower start and stood, heading back downstairs to join Regulus.

“Now, how's it going for you, Reg?”

“Awkwardly,” he said.

“I figured as much.”

“Thanks for stopping by, James. Mum and Dad just sort of leave him be, you know. They aren't making it easier on him.”

“He's been kicking himself, so I bet he just takes it.”

“He wouldn't normally. That's how bad it is.”

“I know,” James said. “That's why I came. Don't worry, I'll have him back good as new.”

“I hope so,” Regulus said. “It'd be nice to see him acting like himself again.” He paused, as Sirius came down the stairs, donned in jeans, his favorite boots and matching jacket.

“Right, we're off.” James pushed Sirius into the fireplace. “See you later, Reg. Diagon Alley!”

The whirl of fireplaces passed them and then they stood in the Leaky Cauldron's fireplace.

James pushed Sirius out into the restaurant and ordered two hamburgers with butterbeers before selecting a table by a window. Sirius crossed his arms and stared at James.

“What's this about?” he asked. “You don't do this unless you feel you need to.”

“Well, there you are: I needed to do this so I did. Now we'll talk and we'll figure out what you can write Sev next. After all, you aren't going to get your man back with one letter.”

“I know, but I don’t...know what else to say.”

The butterbeers came and James thanked the waitress before turning back to Sirius.

“Well, first off, help me with my letter to Lily.”

He reached into his pocket and pulled out a piece of stationary parchment, pushing it toward Sirius, who unfolded it.

Lily,

Undeserving though I am, I love you.

You’re knowledgeable, wise, and awe-inspiring.

I know I’ve failed to be the man you want from a potential partner and I don’t know if I can promise to be that man, but I can promise to try to be that man.

I understand that you desire someone who is mature, kind, understanding.

Someone who can be your rock.

I want to be that man for you. And I’m so sorry that I have failed to be him in my arrogance.

Sincerely,

James Potter

Sirius gave it back. “Cute.”

“That’s it?”

“What else can I say?”

“Maybe some critique? You wrote a pretty awesome letter to Severus, I recall.”

“He tossed it.”

“But you still have a copy.”

Sirius took a swig of butterbeer. “It doesn’t matter. I’ve fucked up—” James reached over the table and smacked Sirius. “Ow!”

“You are a Marauder, for Merlin’s sake! Pull yourself together!”

The waitress stared at them and James backed off of Sirius so she could set their food down. Once she had left, James stared at Sirius.

“Look, mate, you and I are a couple of idiots. We know that. We’re going to fix it and prove to Severus and Lily that we’re the blokes for them. Now you giving up so soon just because you saw him kiss your brother doesn’t really bode well for me.

“Reg talked to you, I know this. You know what that was about and you’ve been down in the dumps since. It’s really disturbing, mate. Regulus is biding his time for your sake, so eat up, get a little tizzy, and we’re going to figure out what else you can write him. God knows, we both got lots of stuff to apologize to him for.”

Sirius nodded, biting into his hamburger.

“I know that,” he said after swallowing. “But...we did so much that we just...there’s a lot he might remember that I never thought was that bad.”

James hummed. “Well, we’ll focus on what we do remember, then.”

Sirius nodded again.

“Then eat up because we’ll need all the energy we can to think on it all.”

#

Dear Severus,

I remember that the first thing I did that, now looking back on, was cruel, was in our second term in our first year. I threw extra toad skins into your cauldron, causing your potion to explode.

You got detention for that, but it was me. I don’t know if you know that.

It wasn’t something I should have done, but I was more upset that we weren’t doing a potion together and that was the time we had together.

That was how I felt, but it doesn’t make it right. I shouldn’t have taken my frustration that day out on you, Severus. It was the first time I messed with your potions, certainly not the last.

There’s no way for me to remember each and every time I messed up an in-class assignment for you and potions was certainly the easiest.

But that was the first.

From toad skin to newt eyes to bat’s urine...you name it, I or one of my friends probably put it in your potion and fucked it up, got you in trouble with Slughorn or something.

I give you permission to fuck with my potions next year if you want or whatever.

I’ll take it.

Fuck with me.

Humiliate me.

Get me in trouble.

Do whatever you feel is fair.

I know I deserve to be punished, so punish me.

Do what you think is necessary to make me pay.

Sirius

James read the letter again as Sirius stirred his ice cream into a milky soup.

“Erm...that last bit is much.”

“What you mean?”

“He left you and said he was going to marry your brother. He’s already punishing you, Sirius. Why also give him permission to hurt you more than he already has? Rather than that, you could end it with just saying you regret it and won’t do it again.”

He grabbed a clean piece of parchment and used a spell to copy up to the last few lines and handed it to Sirius, who reviewed it again.

“So just say...” he grabbed his quill and rewrote the end:

...I never should’ve even done this to begin with.

I did things to you I never should’ve done to someone I love as much as I love you. I wish I could take it back, but I can’t take it back and I can’t go back in time.

The best I can do is stop and hope you’ll find it in your heart to forgive me someday.

All my love,

Sirius

James nodded. “Better,” he said, “Much better.”

The letter was then duplicated to a stationary parchment and neatly folded it.

“Are you going to eat that or are you waiting for it to melt enough that you can read fortunes with it?”

Sirius rolled his eyes and handed it to James, who drank it in three gulps. “Let’s go,” he said.

“Where?”

“Owl Post,” James pointed at the aforementioned office.

“Now?”

“Yes now,” James snapped, grabbing Sirius’ arm and pulling him along. “It’s as good as we can hope it to be so stop being a puffsien and come on.”

“I hate you, Prongs.”

“You’ll get over it,” James said.

They entered the office, immediately hit by the scent of owls and owl pellets.

“Where’s the Prince Estate?” he asked, tugging Sirius over to the map hanging on the wall.

Sirius pointed at Harlow. “Just outside of the town, hidden estate along Canons Brook in the north.”

“Right, pick an owl and send that letter!”

“I really hate you, Prongs,” Sirius growled, but looked for an owl hale enough to do the job.

Harlow might not have been far, but it was still a length away for an owl. Still, he selected an owl, made a payment, and tied the letter to the owl’s leg.

“Now when you say that, is it because I’m pushing you to overcome this depression you’re

under?”

“It’s not depression. It’s more...I feel discouraged.”

“Well, come on. We better make a list of the shit we pulled on Sev so we can get through the rest of the material.” Sirius groaned when the sunlight hit his eyes again.

“There’s a lot.”

“We got one. Just a hundred more to go?”

“More like a thousand. Or so it feels.”

“Well, once you get all those groveling letters out of the way—and I think get them written, send them out every couple weeks or so. Don’t overwhelm him with them, but once you’ve gotten through them, you can mix wooing into the groveling.”

“I doubt I’m going to stop groveling,” Sirius said.

“Probably not, but one can hope, right?”

~DECEMBER 1968~

They wouldn’t let him into the court room.

Severus kicked his feet, legs swinging back and forth. Sirius sat beside him, insistent on being there with him.

The door creaked open and Abraxas Malfoy stepped out with Orion and Eileen. Severus stood up and ran to her. Eileen lifted him up and kissed his cheek.

“You be good for Mr. and Mrs. Black, Severus.”

Severus shook his head, starting to cry. “You’re going to prison?”

She set him down.

“Just for two years. Given what your father was like, they are being very lenient.” Eileen wiped his tears. “Honey, I was certain if I was caught I would never be able to see you till you were all grown up if ever again. With this, I will be there with you when you get on the Hogwarts Express for the first time.”

“I don’t want you to go.”

“I don’t want to go either,” Eileen said. “But our options are very limited. Okay?”

She kissed his forehead.

“You be good, Severus. And I will come home as soon as I can. You’ll be okay. You’re a strong boy, Severus, and I know you’ll be all right. I love you, Severus. And I *will* be home one day.”

She stood and allowed Moody to lead her away.

Orion steered Severus out of the doorway as the rest of the Wizengamot filed out of the court room.

~JUNE 1976~

Tap.

Tap.

Tap.

Severus groaned, covering his head with a pillow.

Tap.

Tap.

Tap.

He groaned again, more angrily than before, and glanced at the clock.

It was nearly two in the afternoon. Then again, he'd not gone to bed till seven, working on a few things here and there till his mother beat down on his laboratory door, shouting at him to go to bed.

Admittedly that was at midnight.

Tap.

Tap.

Tap.

Severus sat up and glared at the owl outside his window.

With a sigh, he let it inside and it held its leg out for him to remove the letter. He gave it a couple knuts and an owl treat, and it flew away.

He opened the letter and, like before, the paper came to life, speaking to him in Sirius' voice.

He let it finish its message and once it was again inanimate, he tapped it with his wand.

"*Incendio*," he said, watching the paper burn.

"Severus!" Eileen shrieked. "Why do I smell smoke?!"

He swore and put the fire out. "Sorry, Mum!" he called.

He winced as the door banged open.

"Mum I'm not decent!" he shouted, rushing for a bathrobe as Eileen inspected the room, seeking... Well, she did catch him smoking the last time he'd been home. Maybe she expected to see another cigarette?

Finding the source of the fire, Eileen narrowed her eyes at him and Severus leaned against the wall. "What is this?"

"It was a letter."

"Since when do you burn your letters?"

“Since they came from Sirius,” he said.

Eileen arched a brow at that and he met her stare with a defiant scowl.

“I don’t have any reason to talk to him and those are my letters, so I can do what I want with them.”

Eileen continued to stare.

“I don’t want to talk about it, Mum,” Severus said. He cleaned the desk and opened the window.
“There. Smoke will be gone in a bit.”

“Severus, what happened?” Eileen asked.

“I don’t want to talk about it,” he said, gnashing his teeth. “So can we not?”

Eileen sighed.

“All right,” she said. “Alastor is coming to dinner tonight, so at least be awake and dressed by five.”

He nodded.

“And clean up your lab.”

She closed the door behind her, giving him a little semblance of privacy so he could gather some fresh clothes and take a shower.

He kept the water lukewarm as he washed, thinking on the letter’s contents. He couldn’t stop Sirius from writing him and placing a spell synonymous with a Howler spell on the paper to get him to read them, but still...

He growled and slapped the tiles with a hand.

I hate him! Severus thought. *What fucking use are apologies after all this time?! Well fuck him!*

He turned the water off and grabbed a towel to dry off with, breathing heavily.

Once he had regained his composure and had dressed, he went down to his lab. Once inside, he wrinkled his nose at the rancid smell.

Damn, he thought.

“*Scourgify*,” he said, cleaning his cauldron and dirty vials.

Another spell had his glassware returning to their appropriate shelves and the cauldron was tucked under the table. He opened the window and looked around for whatever else he needed to do.

Satisfied that his workspace was spotless, Severus left, turning the light off and locking the door.

“Ev’nin’, Lad.”

Severus glanced at Moody. “Good evening, Sir,” he greeted in turn, watching the Head-Auror stride past him, wondering when he had gained a limp.

More importantly, *when* did Alastor Moody greet his mother with a *kiss*?!

Severus managed to hide his gag reflex. He really didn’t need to see his mother kissing another

bloke, even if it's a bloke he didn't mind so much.

Still, Severus had so many questions: When did they develop a relationship that lead to them exchanging kisses? And why after almost eight years?

Or had they been together longer without Severus knowing?

Well, after Tobias Snape, Alastor Moody was a *huge* improvement.

In the past, he didn't like him.

He didn't think he could ever like Alastor. He didn't want to like him. But after his mother returned, he visited every so often.

Severus never left the two of them alone in those few months before he started school, getting to know Alastor alongside his mother.

The closer he came to starting his first year, Alastor took him aside and taught him about sexuality, taking on the role Toby would have had he lived.

Of course, Severus already knew about sex and sexuality from Orion, based on what he'd been told as far as his duty was as far as marrying into the Black family, but there was a difference in the way it was discussed.

From there, he had...not *gleaned* the image of a father onto Alastor, but if ever there was a man he could admire and want to be like...

Well, he couldn't think of anyone better than Alastor Moody.

He followed Alastor and his mother to the dining room, watching them keenly.

So far it was all basic small talk.

How his last assignment had gone.

How his leg held up—apparently this happened after Christmas when Severus returned to school and Alastor now had a prosthetic leg—and other things that really didn't require Severus' attention.

He decided to just study them for now, trying to discern how deep this relationship Moody had with his mother. If Moody in any way meant harm, Severus hoped to sense it.

Of course, Moody was an intimidating wizard anyway.

He set his fork down. "Um...Can I ask you two something?"

Eileen nodded and Alastor fixed his eyes on Severus.

"Are you two together? I saw you kiss my mum, Alastor, so..."

"We weren't sure how to approach the subject with you," Eileen explained, taking Alastor's scarred hand. "After what happened with your father, we thought it might be a little...well, I suppose traumatic would be the word."

"You thought I would be traumatized? By what? By you dating again?" He shook his head. "I'm glad for you, Mum. And you know, I'm almost done with school, I'm almost an adult. So, yeah. I don't mind. I mean, I just didn't know you two were together, that's all."

He didn't think she meant to, but Eileen dropped her shoulders as if a great weight had lifted off her. "Thank you, sweetheart."

Alastor held his hand out to Severus, who gripped it. "Good man, Sev," he said. "Good man."

When Alastor released his hand and sat back down, Severus cleared his throat.

"When did you two get together?" he asked. "I mean, I knew you two were friends since Mum was released from Azkaban, but when did that change?"

"Just a few months ago," she said. "After Alastor lost his leg. I visited him at St. Mungo's, ensured he didn't give the healers too much trouble. Helped with the adjustment of using a prosthetic, and once he was discharged, he asked me to dinner. From there, it...progressed, I suppose."

Alastor kissed her hand and Severus was a little perturbed, but chalked it up to being unused to seeing them getting together. He lifted his glass of butterbeer.

"Well, Moody, I may be underage now, but if you hurt my mum, I don't care what you've faced, I will bring you down."

Alastor laughed. "You're welcome to try, Lad," he said.

~JULY 1976~

Dear Severus,

I am so sorry.

The last time we spoke was just after we escalated from the usual stuff to something much worse and I did not realize that.

My friends and I had been cruel before, but before, it was just the usual fighting, dueling, hexing, and so on. I realized that was the first time that our antics had gone from being just casting spells in anger or due to a lapse of judgement, just weren't thinking to being physical.

Even, I guess, a sexual attack in a way.

So, realizing that, I understand why that was your breaking point.

It wasn't like the time or two we pushed you into the lake. That, I swear, was supposed to be all in good fun. I've been pushed in there. James had been pushed in. Remus too.

We never saw that as a form of torment.

I know this isn't enough. Not yet.

Perhaps never.

But I never meant to hurt you in a way that would push you so far away from me that...

I guess I've lost you forever, thinking on it now. But I love you too much, Severus. I don't know if I can watch you fall in love with someone else.

Just don't think I meant to be cruel. Don't think I ever meant to hurt you or humiliate you. I do wish you had spoken up about it sooner rather than let me keep pushing you away—

“Incendio.”

The letter burst into flames before it could finish.

Severus glared at the ashes, hands shaking and grip around his wand tighter than it needed to be. He slammed it on the table and wiped the ashes into a garbage can.

He grabbed parchment and ink and began to write:

Stop writing me.

I don't want to talk to you. I don't even want to see you.

I hate you, Sirius.

I don't care about what you feel you have to say to me.

I don't want to hear it.

Just leave me alone.

Why is that so hard for you to do?

He set the quill down and crumpled his reply to pieces and added it to the bin, hunching over his desk and covered his head with his hands as he wept.

The doors creaked open.

“Severus?”

Eileen stepped closer and her foot bumped into the bin. She picked it up to set aside...Eileen embraced him. “Sweetie, please tell me what’s going on,” she said. “You’ve not been yourself since school ended. Please tell me what happened.”

And he did.

Chapter 5

He had this dream many times before.

There were usually variations, but the situation was always the same.

He'd be settled between Severus' legs, sucking his cock as Severus ran his hands through his hair.

He'd be hard and leaking through his pants, wanting to touch but also wanting to keep it going as long as he could before the need had strung him so tight he could barely breathe.

"Up."

Sirius released him, licking his lips as he stood, facing Severus.

"Undress."

He watched Sirius intently as he disrobed for him and Sirius met Severus' dark gaze with his own. Severus took his wrist, pulling Sirius back between his legs.

He took Sirius' cock in his hand and squeezed his ass with the other. Sirius placed his hands on Severus' shoulders, closing the distance between them with a kiss—

"SIRIUS ORION BLACK!!!"

Sirius jumped as the Howler woke him. It drifted up to his face, screaming in Eileen's voice.

"YOU HAVE SOME NERVE WRITING MY SON AFTER WHAT YOU DID TO HIM!!! WHAT YOU DID ARE THINGS SOMEONE WHO CLAIMS TO BE IN LOVE DOES. NOT. DO!!!"

"YOU KNOW OUR HISTORY!!! YOU KNOW WHAT SEVERUS HAS GONE THROUGH IN HIS LIFE!!! SO HOW DARE YOU ACT THE WAY YOU HAVE?!!"

"I CAN ONLY ASSUME THAT YOU ARE ASHAMED!!! GOOD!!!"

"YOU SHOULD BE ASHAMED OF YOURSELF!!!"

"IF YOU SO MUCH AS GIVE SEVERUS A PAPER CUT FROM NOW ON YOU'LL WISH IT WAS ONLY A HOWLER YOU'LL GET FROM ME!!!"

The howler ripped up in his lap. He couldn't move, stunned and, while he knew unnecessary, terrified. He looked at his door to see his mother, eyes narrowed and lips pursed.

"Uhm..."

"Never mind, Sirius, you've been kicking yourself enough," she shut the door and he laid back down, hiding his face in his pillow, trying to regain the mood.

Nope.

Having a howler from an angry witch wake you was a certified mood killer.

Sirius groaned when Walburga called for him to come down to breakfast. He didn't want to eat. Still, he fixed his night clothes and went downstairs, forcing his hair to stay out of his face and

slumped at the table.

“Eggs, Master Sirius?” Kreacher asked. Sirius nodded, laying his head on the table.

He felt a strap come around his forehead and lift him off the table. “Mom!”

“Stop slouching,” she said. “We’re going to Diagon today.”

“School stuff?”

“No. New dress robes.”

Sirius wrinkled his nose.

“None of that. They’re for Eileen’s party next week.”

“Uh, you heard her.”

“I *heard* that you’ve been mistreating Severus,” she said. “Not that your invitation was renounced. And it is my understanding you’re trying to fix your mistakes. Good.”

Sirius pulled the wrap off and crossed a leg, leaning back. “I can’t go, Mom.”

“You can,” she said. “And you will. You are a Black. Even if you and Severus are at odds right now, well, I expect you’ll find a way to at least heal your friendship. Regulus, Love, good morning.”

“Morning, Mum,” he yawned, sitting beside Sirius, who stabbed at his food. “What was with the Howler?” he asked Sirius.

“Nothing,” he said.

Regulus arched a brow.

“Really, Reg, I don’t want to talk about it.”

Regulus shrugged and stabbed his own eggs. Sirius ate what he could, but the prospect of seeing Severus again after...

Even without the arrival of Eileen’s howler, he didn’t feel ready to see Severus again after everything that happened between them. At the same time when his parents said they were doing something, there was no way he would get out of it. No matter how much he wanted to.

And in this case, he let himself be dragged to Twilfitt and Tattings to be fitted into a suitable new summer dress robe. The color of it was black with a deep red trim. Regulus had similar robes with a dark blue trim instead.

As Regulus finished his fitting, Sirius glanced at the mirror and winced.

He looked like his father.

Such a horror that would be!

Well, Sirius exhaled. *Nothing for it.*

“Mum, I’m gonna go over to Flourish and Blotts for a bit,” he said.

Walburga hummed in half-interested acknowledgement as he handed her the new robe before heading out of the tailor's heading over to the book store. He wasn't sure what he was looking for, but there had to be something there that might...

He couldn't become Orion.

He *refused* to become Orion.

So, he wouldn't.

Entering the bookstore, Sirius grabbed a basket and began to shop.

#

There were three places one might find Severus:

The first and most obvious was his room. In there he could be found perfecting his new spells, completing his summer homework, or—his favorite activity—sleeping.

If Severus was not there, he could be found in his lab down in the basement.

The area was behind a distressed door which revealed stone stairs and an iron wrought rail heading down into what had previously been dungeons.

Apparently, the Prince Family was once known for some nasty shit.

The dungeons eventually fell out of use and were converted into storage space that had been cleared out when the family was believed to have died out. So, all it took was a bit of scrubbing and some reworking, and voila! Severus had a lab to perfect his favorite craft.

And if he was not *there*, he was most likely in the library, which had a mixture of both Muggle and Wizard tomes recollected over the years since Eileen returned to the house.

Some of the selections were Severus' old textbooks now unused mixed with other Wizard classics:

Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them.

Quidditch Through the Ages.

The Tales of Beadle the Bard.

However, to add to the multitude of magical tomes one could also find:

The Complete Collections of William Shakespeare.

The Complete Collections of Charles Dickens.

The Complete Sherlock Holmes.

Frankenstien.

Dracula.

The Brothers Grimm.

The Lord of the Rings.

But right now, he was staring at the grown collection of *The Boxcar Children* while Eileen directed their house elves Twinkle and Tippy in how she'd like the place to look for her Mid-Summer soiree.

"Mum, I don't read these books anymore," he said when Eileen had a spare moment.

"No, but you are going to have children," she stated as matter-of-fact. "So while you don't read them now, you'll probably be reading them again someday. Oh! I remember this one!" She picked up *The Cat in the Hat*. "I do so look forward to having grandchildren to read these to. You used to love this one when you were a tot."

She flipped through it.

"You know, I think I should also add to our Dr. Seuss books. Your children won't be old enough for *The Boxcar Children* for some time, after all."

"You go ahead and do what you want, Mom," he sighed.

Children.

He knew it'd be expected to continue the family line, but at the same time...he couldn't see himself being a parent. For now, he could say it was due to his age.

But what if he still felt this way by graduation?

By the time he was married to one of the Blacks' sons?

When he was expected to *impregnate* his spouse?

"You have a grimace, Severus."

"I don't want kids. Should've thought about that when I agreed to this—I'm still okay with it, I'll do it...but I don't want to be the kind of parent Toby was."

Eileen embraced him. "You won't be. I don't think whichever brother you decide to marry will be like their parents either. You can be the beginning of a new legacy for the Prince Family and I am proud of that, sweetheart." Eileen kissed his cheek and wiped a bit of lipstick residue away. "I'm so proud of who've become and who you are becoming."

"Thanks Mum," he said, stuffing his hands in his pockets. "I'm, um, going into town. Need anything?"

"No, dear. Supper's at seven, so be back by then."

"Okay."

With that, he bade her and the elves goodbye and left the house, walking along Cannons Brook away from the house to the portkey point he'd hidden from Muggles. Finding the portkey—a small rag buried into a tree's crevice—Severus took it and tucked it in his pocket before being transported to behind a trash reciprocal at Harvey's Shopping Centre.

Severus set the portkey underneath the large bin for safekeeping and stepped into the light.

There were times he liked to just browse, see what had changed since his last traipse into Harlow.

Sometimes a store that had been in the shopping centre before would become something new, allowing him a chance to look into new things.

No matter what the Black family thought about Muggles, they were wrong.

Muggles, Severus found, weren't much different from Wizards.

The only real difference Severus really noted was that there was a lot more creativity among Muggles. He surmised that had to do with their lack of knowledge of the magical community so it allowed them to form their own ideas about magic that, while nothing compared to the real thing, was much more fun.

"Well, well, well!"

Severus glanced up from flipping through *The Forgotten Beasts of Eld* and grinned.

"Richie McRich has returned from boarding school!"

"Richie McRich?" Severus repeated, shaking hands with Wesley. "Mate, I may have family money and all that shit, but I am *not ever* going to be some posh rich kid, no matter where I live or where I go to school."

"Bit late on the summer job market," Wes said.

"Last I checked I'm not sixteen yet. At least ten or eleven months to go till I can get an application in."

Wes sighed, nudging him. "I'm about off. Got an extra joint if you'd like."

"You are a lifesaver!"

"Mum still busting your skinny arse for last time?"

"Yep," Sev said.

The conversation paused as Wesley went to get his jacket and clock out. This allowed Severus some time to purchase the book he'd flipped through.

It was a little below his level, but it was fairly interesting based on what he'd read so far.

Wes nudged him and he followed the older boy outside to a hidden crevice away from the security guards. He handed Severus a fat joint. Once lit, Severus felt the tension melt away from his shoulders.

"I don't get what your Mum's issue with weed is," Wes said. "It works better than any drug you can find and you don't get withdrawals or look like a walking horror show like with crack and meth. Fucking best thing ever!"

Severus hummed in agreement. There were *worse* habits to pick up, surely.

"She's archaic that way."

"You say you're not posh and yet you say posh words like *archaic*."

Severus laughed. "Good vocabulary is not synonymous with wealth, mate."

He inhaled again, letting the smoke burn his throat.

“After all this time I would think you’d know that. I mean, look at me. I’m best in a pair of trousers and trainers than any of those,” he waved at a display of everyday wear from plaid shirts and sweater vests as well as different variants of bellbottom pants.

Severus shuddered. “And I thought the sixties had bad style till that happened.”

“Not a fan of the BeeGees, are you?” Wes asked, smirking.

“Well, I won’t admit their music is rather catchy, so it’s hard *not* to like them, but I think I’m better suited to the best of mullet-rock, you know?”

Wes threw his head back and laughed.

“What? I will not get a mullet! Some people can pull it off. Let them go ahead and do the whole business in the front, party in the back style all they want. It won’t work for me. Nope. Hair’s limpy.”

“Hope that’s all that’s limpy.”

Severus elbowed Wes. “Wanker,” he muttered. “What are you thinking asking a minor that, eh?”

Wes snorted. “Minor? You’re pretty fucking mature, Prince. Sometimes I forget you’re fifteen for all you act like you’re twenty. So yeah I treat you like you’re my age cause I forget you’re not.”

“Well, glad to know you see me as an adult,” Severus sighed.

He looked up at the sky, watching the clouds darken as the sun fell beyond the horizon too far to see.

“Not sure my family would see it that way,” he admitted. He pushed himself off the wall and snuffed the joint out on the sole of his shoe.

“Going home?”

“Need time to rid the smoke or Mum will have my hide. Besides,” he held up the new novel.

“Gonna add this to her hefty collection once I’m done with it.”

“Don’t hold out on visiting too long, Prince,” Wes said. “You need to show your face around these parts a bit more often.”

“You sure of that? Been told I’m not much of a looker.”

“Fuck ‘em up the arse!” Wes shouted, flipping the bird. Sev snorted and returned to the bin where he’d hid the portkey.

Eileen would have a field day if she knew about his friendship with Wes.

Not because he was a Muggle, but because of his behavior half the time. Wes was cool in the way of the uncouth, foul mouthed college kid.

An opposite of how Severus used to look up to Lucius Malfoy.

Granted, Malfoy wasn’t anything like Wes and Severus found he appreciated Wes a lot more than Lucius. In particular that Lucius Malfoy would *never* be caught dead with a joint between his

fingers, let alone his lips.

Add to that he actually *was* a posh rich kid, and you'd have two nasty conflicting personalities.

It was just too dangerous to let someone like a Malfoy anywhere near a bloke like Wes.

Severus picked up the cloth and felt the tug around his bellybutton spiral him back to the brook. Once it was secure in its spot again, he sat at the edge looking down, hoping smelling of earth and water would mask the smell of marijuana.

He sighed, laying down on the grass and breathing deeply, holding his wand above him.

The tip sparked and he moved it with his wrist. He had no image in mind, but in the end, he could make out the features of a man. A few more twists of the wand and he growled, slashing the image of Sirius' face and sat up, hugging his knees.

I don't want to love him anymore, he thought, staring at the water rushing by. *I don't know why I still love him. But I know I don't want to love him anymore.*

A fruitless prayer, if anything.

It wasn't as if Severus wasn't *trying* to let go, but sometimes he wondered if he was starting to forgive him now that he had time away.

Perhaps those stupid letters were working and he would rescind his proposal to Regulus. Not that Regulus would mind. He wasn't all that comfortable being stuck in the middle and Severus figured he had been just as cruel to Regulus as he was being to Sirius.

Only thing was he *meant* to be cruel toward Sirius these days.

Not Regulus.

Regulus always had been a sweetheart, but he was also more like a little brother to Severus as well. So in that sense, Severus could understand the awkwardness of the situation.

He shut his eyes, remembering...

~AUGUST 1971~

"The house is ready," Orion said to Eileen. "We had taken the liberty to fixing up the majority of the grounds. Bedrooms are ready as are the kitchen, a dining room, and two of the halls and receiving rooms. Two of Kreacher's relatives will go to you and Severus. Twinkle and Tippy are fine young elves and will do good work for you while you recover."

"Thank you, Orion," Eileen said, leaning most of her weight on a cane.

She'd gone thin and frail since Severus had seen her since, but that aside, she had been a model inmate while in Azkaban. Orion and Eileen paused, but Severus moved onward, pausing outside a room. He tried to open it but it would not budge—

"Severus," Eileen called. "Stay close. We'll look around after dinner."

Severus pouted and returned to her side.

"This is more than I expected. I didn't think you'd actually be able to get the house back for us."

“Of course I would,” Orion said. “The House of Black is nothing if not honorable.”

“Oh, do be quiet, Orion,” Eileen snapped, straightening as much as she could in her state. “I am not sorry for breaking our engagement. I never liked you much then and granted, I still don’t like you now. It baffles me how your boys are so sweet given the parenting you and Walburga like to administer.”

One hand laid on Severus’ shoulder, pushing him to hide behind her. “You think I was *ignorant*,” she snarled. “You think I don’t know about the way you treat your own boys? The books I had bought.”

“Muggle books,” Orion said, shrugging. “Why ought I allow that rubbish in my house?”

“I allow it. Those were good books worthy of being read by both muggle and wizard alike. Regardless of your thoughts, there is *no* reason whatsoever for the bruises I saw on my child! Remember why I went to Azkaban, Orion, and do well to remember that I would sooner commit murder again.”

Severus snuck away, deciding to let his mother and Orion fight. It wouldn’t affect the contract any as far as he knew. He found Sirius outside the mansion and sat down next to him.

“They’re fighting again,” he said.

“That doesn’t surprise me,” Sirius grumbled. “They fight a lot these days, I noticed.”

Severus’ back twinged at the reminder. “Yeah,” he agreed. “But we’ll be okay. We’ll get new copies now that my Mum’s free again.”

“I just wish he’d not caught us when he did,” Sirius said, rubbing his shoulder. “I hate him.”

Severus hummed, not responding further. He hated Orion, too.

The last two years living with the Blacks had poisoned him further against Walburga and Orion while bringing him closer to Sirius and Regulus. But in those months, he felt closer still to Sirius.

Sirius laid his head on Severus’ shoulder. “I’m glad you don’t have to be near my parents anymore but I don’t want you to go.”

“It’s only a couple more weeks,” he reminded Sirius. “And then we start school. After that, we should only have to deal with being apart during the summer.”

“What if we end up in different houses?” Sirius asked.

“Then we’ll figure out how to spend time together anyway,” Severus assured him. “There’s got to be ways for inter-house relationships.”

“I guess so,” Sirius said. “I just don’t know, Sev.”

“Neither do I, but we’ll figure it out. I know we will. There’s ways we can still be together, Siri.” He glanced about the landscape. To think all this land belonged to his mother! That would be his!

Severus found it almost surreal.

Sirius lifted his head off Severus’ shoulder and kissed the corner of his mouth. “I love you, Severus,” he said. Severus turned to him and kissed Sirius’ forehead.

"I love you, too," he whispered. Sirius managed a smile then stood, smile gone. Severus looked behind him to see Orion approaching with a sour look on his face.

"Sirius, we're leaving," he growled.

Sirius whispered a quick goodbye and followed his father.

Severus looked at his mother, looking like a great and powerful sorceress. Hair flecked grey, a bit thin and sallow, but still tall and regal. Once Orion and Sirius disappeared, she let herself slouch, seeming older beyond her years. Severus ran up to her and helped her stand again.

"Mum?"

"I'm all right," she said, shivering. Severus shouted for Tippy to help him bring Eileen back into the mansion. "Have you gotten your school things yet?"

Severus shook his head.

"Then we'll do that tomorrow."

"Are you sure? Maybe you should rest, Mum."

"I will rest when we make this place a proper home. I want it ready for showing off by Christmas."

"There's still time till then."

Eileen hummed, stroking Severus' hair. "Of course, sweetheart," she said. "But that doesn't mean that we can't be ready ahead of time."

"Mistress Prince," Twinkle said. "A Mr. Moody is at the door."

Severus recognized the name, but he could not put a face to it.

"Let him in," Eileen said. "Thank you, Twinkle."

~JULY 1976~

An owl landed on a bush beside him, holding a letter out for him. Severus took it and the bird left. Turning it over, he recognized the school crest.

He opened it quickly, eager to find out his OWL results:

Transfiguration – O

Defense against the Dark Arts – O

Charms – O

Astronomy – O

Potions – O

History of Magic – EE

Herbology – O

Care of Magical Creatures – O

Arithmancy – O

Study of Ancient Runes – O

He hadn't doubted he'd do well—save for in History, but with Binns it was hard not to just doze off in that class and he hadn't intended to continue studying it anyway.

Still, *Exceeds Expectations* was much better than he thought he'd do.

So of course it wasn't straight O's, which would probably get his mother on his case about History, but if she had Binns (and he bet she did), she might let it go.

He knew he wanted to continue Potions and Defense.

Perhaps he'd also continue Transfiguration and Herbology...or maybe he'd continue Ancient Runes. Regardless what he decided to pursue, Severus was certain he could pursue any career he wanted with such grades.

Severus noted something below the report and he grinned wider:

Mr. Severus Prince is hereby invited to enroll into Alchemy classes at his own leisure. If this course is taken, please respond to the questionnaire enclosed.

He decided to wait and see the questionnaire later, stuffing the letter back in the envelope and heading on home.

Chapter 6

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

“Please don’t fidget, Master Severus,” Twinkle said as she measured the cloth that would make the back of his new dress robes.

“I’m sure my usual robes will do just fine,” he said. Eileen tutted, wagging her finger.

“You’ve grown, dear,” she reminded him. “You’ve become quite tall and you’re shoulders are filling out nicely. A refitting is necessary for all your robes. In fact, maybe we ought to take a trip to Diagon. Get your new school books and have your uniforms refitted as well. And then if I can get us in, maybe have some new dress robes made at Twilfitt and Tattings.”

Severus stuck his tongue out, slouching.

Twinkle huffed and glared at him.

“Okay, sorry. I’ll stay still.” He squared his shoulders back and stood straight, letting her get back to work. “I don’t like that shop, Mum. They’re too posh.”

Eileen laughed. “That’s cute, Love. Too posh. Of course they’re *posh*. You’re a Wizard of the Prince line. You need at least *one* suit and robe from Twilfitt and Tattings and you’ll thank me for it.”

“Maybe I will, maybe I won’t,” Severus said. “But I’ll get *one* outfit from there if only to get you off my back.” Eileen hummed, smiling knowingly.

“That’s all I ask. Twinkle. Have you the measurements?”

“I do, Mistress.”

“Send two copies to Madam Malkin’s and also to Twilfitt and Tattings.”

Twinkle bowed and apparated, allowing Severus to stretch, glad to be free of her poking and prodding.

“I think,” Eileen continued, “we should go ahead and go down to Diagon. Get it all taken care of before the Midsummer party. Have you decided to pursue Alchemy?”

“I have,” Severus said. “Forgot to tell you I sent the letter this morning. I don’t think I’ll know what text book I’ll need for that in a couple days.”

“Well, if we have to go back then we will,” Eileen said. “So, my understanding is that you’ve decided on Alchemy, Potions, Defense against the Dark Arts, and Charms?”

“Yes,” he said. “I’ll get the list and, my cloak.”

“Good. We’ve a busy day ahead—welcome back, Twinkle.”

“Madam Malkin and Mr. Tatting will have new clothes for Master Severus by tea time, Mistress.”

“Excellent,” Eileen said. “I’ll meet you in the living room, Severus.”

He replied an affirmative and went to retrieve his belongings. He paused, staring at the letter on the desk and sighed, waiting for it to come to life. This one didn't, but resting beside it was a bouquet.

Severus ran his hand through his hair, glaring at the flowers:

White alstroemerias, red peonies, marigolds, and yellow roses bulked out with primrose, dog rose, and pink forget-me-not bundles. They were tied by an ivy vine.

He opened the letter which held a guide to the flowers and a short note:

Severus,

I'll be at your mother's party. You probably know that, though. I hope you'll bear in mind the meaning of these flowers. Perhaps you'll understand how I feel for you and about myself.

I miss you, Severus.

I miss you a lot.

Sirius

Severus took the letter, ready to rip it. He sighed then set it down. He grabbed his cloak and school list, and went to the living room. He managed to throw her off with a tiny smile.

"See you in a bit," he said, taking a bit of Floo Powder and stepping into the hearth.

"Diagon Alley," he said, dropping the powder and spinning through the network till he landed in Flourish and Blotts, stepping out of the fireplace and dusting himself off.

Eileen came out after him. "I'm off to Twilfitt and Tattings," she said, handing him a purse.

"Sure, Mum—"

"Sev!"

He grunted when he was tackled. "Good to see you, too, Lily."

Lily released him and held her hand out to Eileen. "Good morning, Ma'am," she said. "Lily Evans."

Eileen gripped Lily's hand in hers. "Pleasure to meet you, Lily. Severus never told me he had *other* Gryffindor friends. Would have been nice to know there were others outside of Sirius."

"Mum, shut it." Lily elbowed him.

"Tell me you got into Alchemy classes, too. I don't want to take them alone."

"Yes, I did and I will be," Severus assured her.

Lily cheered.

"You got into the butterbeer early, didn't you? Friggin' lightweight you are, Evans."

"Shut it, Prince!" Lily snapped. "I'm not the one who drank a whole case of fire—"

He covered her mouth. "I'll see you later, Mum."

Eileen hummed, eying them suspiciously, but left.

“She busts my ass for smoking weed, Evans. You think I’ll live if she knew about the firewhiskey dare? No one would find my body!”

“Sorry.”

“No you’re not, friggin’ witch.”

“So, what other courses are you taking next year? Needs to be at least four, right? I’m definitely taking NEWT potions and Transfiguration. I’m debating if I want to continue Care of Magical Creatures or Herbology, so I might do both.”

“I’m just going to continue Potions, DADA, and Charms with Alchemy as the fourth NEWT subject.”

“If I didn’t know better, I’d think you were considering entering the Auror program.”

Severus shook his head, “Nah. Healing maybe, but then again, you’ve wanted to be a healer for ages. Still want to work in obstetrics?”

“You know it,” Lily said.

Severus found their potions texts and handed Lily a copy.

“Thanks. Besides, I kind of see you being more a scientist or something of those lines: helping medical research advance and that lot. You kind of already are a scientist.”

“Potioneer, technically,” Severus said. “But yeah, I think that’s more my style. Solitary, making things explode, trying not to die amidst making things explode.”

He added the charms text to his basket.

“Yeah, sounds fun.”

In all honesty, he didn’t know what he was going to do with his life. Some of it was already decided for him, given his family’s relations with the Black family. So he knew where that would go, but...

“Oi! Prince, help me get that book down!” Lily said, pulling him toward a shelf where her transfiguration text was located.

Severus grabbed it for her and Lily took it.

“Thank you.”

He hummed.

“Okay, you’ve gone melancholy very quickly.”

“I’m not melancholy.”

“Yes, you are,” she said. “I know you better than that.”

“I thought you’d hate me after that day, to be honest.”

"I try not to think on it. You were upset and while I'm still hurt by what you said, I understand. I don't think I'd be thinking clearly if I was ganged up on like that."

Severus hummed. "I am sorry for it, Lily."

"Good. I forgive you, Sev," she said, giving him a one-armed hug. "Now, I think that we are long overdue for a trip to Florean Fortescue's."

"Fine by me. Anything to delay any reason to go to Twilfitt and Tattings."

"Ooh, very posh."

"With a giant bloody stick up the ass."

"Aren't you uncouth," Lily teased. "But we love you anyway. Granted, the rest of my boys are working hard to make it up to you."

"It was *YOU?!'*" Severus snapped. "Damn it, Evans, can't you leave well enough alone?"

"I've a soft spot for sad pups," she said. "And Sirius was distraught. Actually it was rather disturbing seeing him like that. I mean, I *knew* you and he were betrothed, but I didn't realize you could decide to pursue Regulus instead of him."

Severus groaned, running his hand through his hair and scratched the back of his neck.

"Well, if you're going to meddle, at least you should know everything: Regulus and I are just friends. It's weird for both of us and it doesn't feel natural for either of us to be..."

"Romantic?"

"Yeah."

Lily set her books in front of the clerk, handed him some coins and stepped out of line. Once Severus had completed his own purchase, he joined her again.

"Maybe I was forcing it, I guess, but it's not the same as it was with Sirius. And even then, Sirius hasn't been...he isn't the Sirius I grew up with. He's not the same."

"Well, are you?"

"I see your point, but that's not what I mean. If he wanted to spend time with me, there were other ways he could have gotten that across. Why bully me? Why humiliate me?"

"Pigtails," Lily said. "Sirius has changed. He's just not very mature. Out of the five of us, I think only you, me, and Remus really grew up since we met on the train. And even then, with Remus one can't be completely certain. I don't believe you and Sirius meant to drift apart and he missed you and didn't know how to tell you he missed you. To be honest, I'm not a legilimens so I can't really say what really goes through that idiot's head."

"Hence pigtails," Severus said.

"Exactly," Lily said.

They took over a table and Severus went to place two orders of vanilla and strawberry ice cream

with chocolate drizzle. After the ice cream was made, Severus joined her and placed the bowl in front of her before taking his own seat.

“He sent me flowers today,” he said, conjuring an image from memory. “And a note. I’m going to be seeing him soon, but still.”

“Wow, I didn’t think Sirius Black was the flower sending type.”

“If he thinks this would work, he’s trying too hard.”

“Maybe, but I think he’s trying to say he has remorse for how he treated you but he hopes you’ll forgive him and that he does love you.”

Severus arched a brow.

“My mother is a florist. She loves this stuff and insisted my sister and I know flowers too:

“The marigold is symbolic of despair and grief. Red peonies for devotion. Alstroemerias for loyalty. Primroses for young love and resisting separation. Dog roses have two meanings which are pain and pleasure. Ivy for fidelity. Yellow roses mean forgive-and-forget. And forget-me-not for true love.

“So, I think he’s trying to say that he despairs the way he treated you, but he’s still devoted and loyal to you. Added with primrose and forget-me-not, he’s probably saying you’re his true love and he doesn’t want to lose you. The dog rose...might mean that he acknowledges the pain he caused, but given the dual meaning...” she shrugged.

“I’m not entirely sure what his message is in regard to that. And the yellow rose here is perhaps a request to let go of the past and move on. Probably have a future together.”

He waved his wand, ridding the bouquet from the table. “I don’t know if I can forgive him after everything that we went through. You know?”

“They aren’t bad wizards. We’re still kids and logically we’re going to do stupid things. He did a lot of stupid things, but one thing never changed and that was that he never stopped loving you. I’m not saying you *should* forgive him. That’s not my right, nor my place. I am helping him, yeah, but whether or not you take him back is on you. As far as I’m concerned, he’s still a lot of groveling to do yet.”

Severus nodded. “He does. He really fucking does.”

“Well, you can forgive him but make him think he’s not.”

“I’m not an actor, Lily. I don’t think I can do that.”

“I think you can. The point is to make him squirm just a little bit more. But from where I stand, I think it’d be a great idea to send *him* a bouquet back in response. Nothing too harsh, maybe a little similar, but with a message of...I’m still mad at you but I’m willing to rekindle our friendship. Not love. Friendship. Right now, you’re in the position where you can tell Sirius Black to jump and he’ll ask how high.”

Severus scrunched his nose. “Way to make it sound manipulative, Evans.”

“You love me anyway, Prince, and you’ll thank me for it.”

"I swear you're Laverne de Montmorency reincarnate."

"Without the green skin, apparently. Pity. That would have saved me a lot of money wondering about my Halloween costumes." She hunched over and curled her fingers. "I'll get you my pretty. And you're little dog, too!"

"Cute."

"I know I am," Lily said. "So yeah, let's see...for that bouquet, I suggest using...butterfly weed, eglantine, lily of the valley, yellow sweetbrier, and lavender. Pretty much it's the kind of bouquet that says...I don't love you or trust you as much as I used to, I need time to heal, and I hope you find happiness."

"I'm seeing him in a couple days and I'm not sending a bloody bouquet just to tell him to go bugger himself when I can do that just as well without flowers."

"You're call. You're the one being wooed. Though, I didn't think he'd go for the flower route. Serenading, sure." Severus snorted, setting his spoon down and covered his mouth with a paper napkin as he laughed. "But a bouquet? No. Not to say I'm not impressed with the effort he's been putting into this, but you're not required to return the sentiment."

"Good to know," he said. Severus checked his watch and sighed. "Damn. I got other things to pick up and if I don't meet my mother by tea, she'll freak."

"She doesn't seem like the type of witch to cross," Lily said. "So, with that, I bid adieu and hope our paths cross again soon."

Severus bade goodbye and left the parlor, books tucked under his arm.

He stopped to pick up some potion ingredients and new quills and ink before heading to Madam Malkins to pick up his new school robes. After checking to make sure they'd fit, he took the packages with him, thanked Madam Malkin, and headed to meet his mother at Twilfitt and Tattings.

He glared at the store front, wrinkling his nose at the capitalized, swirling letters.

With a sigh and reminding himself that stepping in *every so often* when required wouldn't obliterate him, he entered the shop. Eileen waved him over to finish the fitting and he repressed any discontent at being in the far too bright store as the tailor reviewed his work.

The dress robes in question were black and silver.

"I think, Madam Prince, it would do to tie his hair back as well. We've a matching set of ribbon that will hold his hair back."

"I think so," Eileen said. "He's got a strong jaw."

"Handsome cheekbones, too."

Severus backed away from the hand reaching for his cheek. He batted the outstretched hand away. "Don't touch me." He turned to Eileen. "My hair is fine as is."

Eileen hummed and turned to the tailor. "You are right about the cheekbones. And I think his hair is long enough to pull, back, rather than hang around as it does."

"I do not approve nor do I consent to wearing any type of hair tie."

"Why not?" Eileen said. "You'd look good with your hair back."

"I doubt it," he said, trying not to tug on his hair around his ears. As if he wanted her to find that he pierced his upper pinnae. He half expected that if she *did*, she'd rip them out herself. Eileen arched a brow. "What?"

Eileen turned to the tailor. "Let's see his hair back."

The ribbon in question flew toward them and Severus' hair was tied back, still covering the upper shell of his ears. He groaned and glared at her.

"Yes, I think that will do just nicely," she said. "You look absolutely stunning, love."

"Thanks Mum," he mumbled, tugging the ribbon out.

"And if you thought I didn't know about the piercing, you're very much mistaken." Severus stared at her. "I'm your mother. I also know about the tattoo you've gotten done on your left shin."

"Tilly," he growled. Caught, he tucked his hair back, revealing the steel bar. Eileen tutted.

"You couldn't have chosen something nicer? Even if just a single ring on the lobe?"

"No, I couldn't have. I will take your jewelry and beauty ideas, crumble them into a ball, and punt them into the rubbish bin where they belong."

"That's cute, dear," Eileen said. "But you're not wearing that to the party."

"Why is it I never know if you're going to murder me or not."

"There are days, Love, but ultimately, I love you too much." She pinched his cheek. "You're stuck in the land of the living for now."

"Oh, joy," Severus muttered, rolling his eyes. "Are we done?"

"Indeed we are, Young Master Prince," The tailor said.

"Great. I'm out." Eileen grabbed his arm. "Mum!"

"How about we get one more dress robe set. I'm thinking a deep dark blue or a vibrant green color. But you go ahead and choose, Severus."

"Now you're just torturing me."

"You have so much black! It worries me. Color is good on you, love," Eileen pulled him over to a few spindles. "Pick a color you like. Just one more."

Severus looked around, drawn to a darker grey fabric, but his mother clicked her tongue, so he assented and grabbed a dark burgundy shade to go with it, if only to get her off his back.

He handed them to the tailor, who—with fresh measurements in mind—assured them that the new robes would be ready by the party and would be owl delivered soon.

Eileen thanked him and nudged Severus.

“Now we can go home,” she said. “I think we’ll get pizza brought in. Since you indulged this old lady a bit.”

“Lead with that next time!”

~CHRISTMAS EVE 1971~

Severus would rather be sleeping as much as he could instead of mingling with all these wizards and witches trying to get a look at him and Eileen.

He felt as if he was being paraded like a performing monkey.

At least Sirius was here to make it a little more bearable and he stated this to him.

Sirius grinned. “Glad to know it.”

He grabbed Severus’ hand and pulled him to the dance floor. Severus obliged and let himself be led in a dance.

“I love you,” he said, resting his forehead against Severus’. “And I miss you. It’s hard being in different houses.”

“We’re doing fine regardless,” Severus said, grabbing the back of Sirius’ neck. “What does it matter that we’re not in the same house? You know me, Siri, just as I know you.” He moved his hand to cup Sirius’ cheek. He stroked the bone under Sirius’ eye. “But even so, I miss you, too,” he said.

Sirius leaned in and kissed Severus gently.

“I can’t wait till we’re adults,” he whispered.

~JULY 1976~

Severus opted for the grey and burgundy robes that arrived during breakfast and had Tilly put it aside till it was time to greet the guests. He spent the time waiting till the time to get ready reading through his new text books.

“Severus, are you ready?” Eileen asked, entering the library. She slumped her shoulders and glared. “You’ve not even showered?”

“Mum, it’s not even noon yet. Keep your hair on. You look nice, by the way.”

She wore a silver-grey full length gown with a chiffon and bead collar. The cape of the gown whipped behind her as she moved toward him. Her hair was pinned back in a large beehive, accenting the grey streaks, and a couple curls draped over her shoulder.

Eileen crossed her arms. “Don’t sweet talk me. The caterers will be here any moment and I had hoped you’d be ready and able to help.”

Severus closed the book. “Sorry, Mum. I didn’t know you wanted me to help.”

Eileen sighed and kissed his forehead. “Go get ready and help me finish up here while you can.”

Severus kissed her cheek and went to shower and prepare for the night to come. Once cleaned and dry, he quickly donned the burgundy dress robes.

He wrinkled his nose. He felt like he had made a mistake. Perhaps it was too Gryffindor.

Well, too late now. He pulled his hair back away from his face as his mother had requested—but *sans ribbon*. There were normal hair ties available that he could use.

He donned his best boots and went to the ball room.

“Over in the corner there,” Eileen said.

The caterers moved the tables where she desired and then set the food on top. She turned to him and grinned. “You put your hair back.”

“I almost didn’t.”

“Oh, don’t be like that, sweetheart,” Eileen said, cupping his cheeks. “You look very handsome.”

“Thanks.”

“Now, here’s the layout.” She waved her wand, summoning a scroll. “I want it to match as close as possible. I have to go to the kitchens and make sure there are enough elves to help Twinkle and Tilly with the main course.”

“Okay, Mum.”

Severus tapped the parchment, mumbling a spell under his breath, and the layout moved from the page to the room, laying everything out in silver lines.

“My son, the genius,” she said, patting his cheek.

Eileen strode out of the room and Severus cleared his throat.

“Just follow the lines and all’s good,” he said, giving the caterers thumbs up.

#

Sirius and Regulus apparated with their parents to the Prince Family’s estate, arriving just as the Malfoy’s did. Walburga held onto Orion’s arm, letting him lead his family inside.

There were several guests already milling around the ball room.

“Eileen!” Walburga called, approaching the Princes. Eileen and Walburga greeted each other with a kiss to their cheeks. “Love what you’ve done with the place. Where is Severus?”

“I believe he’s seeing to one of our last-minute guests. Lily Evans, if I recall.”

“I don’t know that family,” Walburga said.

“I would think not, she’s muggleborn. And before you say another word. She is a guest in *my* house. And she will be given due respect as a friend to our sons.”

Sirius and Regulus backed away, deciding to find Severus and Lily instead. They were over at the punch bowl. Lily looked at them and waved at them.

“The noble Blacks have arrived!” she said. “Looking as posh as ever. I’m going to go find Potter and mess with him.”

“Don’t be too cruel,” Severus said. Lily waved him off and walked away.

Severus handed the brothers glasses. “Ignore her, she’s weird.”

“Weird? She’s nasty to me and James,” Sirius said. Regulus hummed.

“You’re not exactly her favorite person, but when she really likes someone she gets very friendly in a very strange way. I never realized it before. But it’s not a bad weird,” he said. He shifted foot to foot. “How’s summer going for you two?”

“Not too bad,” Regulus said.

Sirius shrugged. Severus already knew.

“Same old,” he said, glancing up at Severus and repressed a shiver.

He thought he could face him after not being around him for weeks.

Apparently, he wasn’t.

The piercings along the shell of his ear tempted him to lick and bite. He knew Severus didn’t get them to tempt him, but *fuck*...

This would be a long night.

Chapter End Notes

<http://languageofflowers.com/flowermeaning.htm>

http://harrypotter.wikia.com/wiki/Laverne_de_Montmorency

Chapter 7

Chapter Notes

NEW TAGS

Severus led the rest of his school mates to the library while the adults engaged in the party.

He did his best to ignore the heated stare drilling a hole into his back from Sirius, but otherwise, it wasn't so bad. Lily was looking through the books, exclaiming that she hadn't known that the Princes collected muggle stories as well.

"Oh! Grimm Fairy Tales!" she said, pulling the book down and flipping through it. "Potter, Black, if you ever want to know what I'm talking about when I'm calling myself a fairy godmother," she held the book open to *Cinderella*. "This is the story to look into."

Potter took the book from her and began to read. Sirius looked over his shoulder.

"But that little thing you said isn't in here?"

"What thing?"

"Bee bop bip boopity..."

"Bibidi bobidi boo?"

"Yeah."

"For the sake of my sanity, we don't have any Disney in this house," Severus said. "Its fine when you're seven, but after a while..."

"You're missing out," Lily said. "*Robin Hood* was well done. It's so cute."

"I stand corrected: Its fine to like Disney if you are a child or Lily."

"Still missing out."

"I doubt that," Severus said.

"You have Dr. Seuss books. I doubt—"

"Mum gets those. Insists they're for her future grandchildren and that shit. Me? I prefer more classical literature. *Dracula* is one of my top favorites once you get into it. It can be a bit heavy and the like. Where is...oh. Damn elves probably messed up my system."

He pulled out an anthology of the works of H.P. Lovecraft.

"These are what I'm reading my kids."

"That would give them nightmares!"

"I never said I'd read it to them when they were five."

Sirius passed him, looking through the other children's books Eileen had collected over the years.

"Maybe at six youngest,"

"I would wait till they were eleven to let my future children read Lovecraft, to be honest," Lily said. "So if they get nightmares from you reading *Cthulhu*, you'll only have to blame yourself."

Severus shrugged and glanced over at Sirius, who was staring at *The Boxcar Children* series.

He excused himself as Lily was pulled into a conversation with Potter and Regulus, approaching Sirius. "Don't ask me how this series isn't finished yet. Mum just keeps adding them whenever a new volume comes out."

Sirius hummed.

Severus arched a brow at him. "Are you okay?"

"Just...trying to keep my distance," Sirius said. "You haven't forgiven me yet, so..." He shrugged. "I'm just trying to keep myself from kissing you since I'm not allowed to anymore."

Severus arched a brow. "Well, I need to talk to you about that: I'm still mad at you, but I..." He sighed. "I got the flowers. I understand what you were trying to say with them."

Sirius looked at him at last.

"I don't know if I can forgive you. Not yet. I'm still mad at you, Siri."

"I know," he said. "You're mum's howler was a bit of a shock—"

"She sent you a howler?" Severus asked, wincing. He chuckled and crossed his arms. "Well, maybe I should forgive you then. I didn't think she'd do that."

"Yeah, why did you tell her? After all this time, you never told her."

Severus clicked his tongue. "It was after the last letter you sent—before the flowers, of course. Was trying to write back telling you to bugger off."

"Do you want me to?"

"Sometimes," Severus said. "I get you're trying to make it up to me, but I don't know what to tell you, Siri. I don't know if I can trust you again like I used to." Sirius hummed.

"You will," he declared.

Severus narrowed his eyes, ready to retort, but Sirius took his shoulders and pressed his forehead to Severus'.

"I know you will be able to trust me again, Sev. You'll still be mad at me, I'm sure, but you'll forgive me. You'll trust me enough to let me back into your heart. I want to bear your name and have your children. I fucked up. I know that, but I'm not ready to concede."

"You're annoyingly tenacious," Severus muttered.

Sirius grinned. "Thanks. Such is my ultimate goal in life, Love." Severus moved away from him,

putting some more distance between them, and crossed his arms.

“Have fun with that, Black.”

“Oh, I will, Prince,” Sirius said. “I most certainly will.”

“Oi, Sev! Why’s your mum snogging Mad Eye Moody in the hall?” Regulus asked, looking particularly ashen. Severus groaned and banged his head against a shelf.

#

It’d gone better than he thought it would.

Now as Severus tried to assure the rest there was nothing unsavory going on between his mother and the auror, Sirius set the package he’d put in his pocket down and returned them to their proper size.

Perfect.

The flowers were merely an introduction of the array of gifts he wanted to give.

Severus wasn’t a girl, after all, but flowers were unanimous. They could bear a message of sorts in ways that words, sometimes, never could. Add to it, they also could make excellent potion ingredients.

But the next gift was different.

This time, and a few more times to go in the near future, Sirius wanted to show Severus that he still knew him. Still knew what he liked and disliked.

He wanted to do more than just win him back. Sirius wanted Severus to initiate. He would woo. He would court. But he would not kiss him, would not touch his cheek or grab or embrace without first *knowing* Severus wanted him to.

In that moment, he would likely give in, like a tightly coiled spring of a jack-in-the-box.

“I told you I didn’t even know till a few days ago that they were even seeing each other!” Severus snapped at Regulus, who had taken to teasing about having a tight-ass auror for a stepfather. “And they aren’t married!”

“Aw, but I can see it now,” Lily added. “You could be running after a bunch of little baby Moodys.”

“Shut up, Evans!”

“What? Don’t want to be a big brother?” She asked. “I think it’d be cute. Right, Reg?”

“Yup.”

“You’re both asses,” Severus snarled. Regulus and Lily just laughed at that.

James nudged Sirius, scowling. “Is it just me or is your brother being a little over fond of Evans?”

“Clean your glasses, Prongs,” Sirius said. “Even if he did like her, he wouldn’t pursue her. Too much of a Mama’s boy to even admit it to himself, I’ll bet.”

He set the letter on top of the set he'd bought:

A leather bound journal, a stationary of fine silky parchment and matching envelopes, augerey feather quills, and new ink of gunmetal grey liquid.

Perfect.

"There's the sprogs!" Moody snapped. "Parents been wondering where you'd gone and gotten yourself into."

"Sure they have," Regulus said. Severus stepped on his foot. "OW!"

"Back to the dining room with you all," Moody said, pointedly ignoring Regulus' comment.

"Will Walburga and Orion Black behave?" Severus asked. "Or are they going to continue insulting guests?"

Moody laughed, clapping his shoulder. "They'll behave, lad, lest they want to be reminded what the Ministry's policy on harassment toward underage wizards and witches is."

With that, he shooed them out of the library. Where Eileen had gone, he didn't know, but Sirius could surmise that she returned to the ball room.

And as they reentered the ball room, James groaned beside him.

"I didn't know this was a dancing event."

"Relax, mate," Sirius said. "Usually me and Sev open the dancing part, *celebrity couple* and all that shit...well, maybe not this time."

He watched Severus offer his hand to Regulus, who accepted. He wanted to hide how much it hurt to see the love of his life dance with his little brother, but failed.

He hated how much it still hurt, even knowing how Regulus felt about the matter, and the support he had from his friends.

Well, nothing for it, Sirius bowed to Lily.

"May I have this dance, Miss Evans?"

"Gladly," Lily said, letting him lead her to the floor. "You're parents look like they're about to die where they stand."

"Good," Sirius said. "Maybe Death will hurry up and rescue me from them."

"Careful what you wish for," Lily said. "Death does not make a good fairy godmother, or so I'm told."

"I still don't know why you keep using that term," he said. "What good is a fairy godmother?"

"You poor dear! There's a whole library upstairs that explains detailing the use of a fairy godmother. That story I pointed out, for instance. *Cinderella*. She's stuck with her abusive stepmother and stepsisters. They treat her like a dog, make her do things only servants do. Treat her worse than some do House Elves.

"Then the king and queen announced that they'd be holding a ball so that their son could pick a

suitable girl to be his wife. All the eligible girls were meant to attend. And Cinderella, well, she fit the bill as well. Except her family would not have it. They forced her to stay home.

“So her fairy godmother wouldn’t have it and decided to step in. She gave her a beautiful ball gown, transfigured a pumpkin into a carriage and mice into horses as well as the dog into a driver. She transfigured the ragged dress Cinderella wore into a gorgeous ball gown and her worn shoes into glass slippers. So Cinderella went to the ball. She had no intention of finding love that night, but the prince chose her anyway. And all she wanted was to dress up and have a night off.

“Course, there was a time restraint. She had to get out of there before midnight. She nearly didn’t make it and in her hurry, lost one of the slippers. So the prince decided to take the shoe and find her after all, not many feet could easily fit into a slipper of glass.

“In the end, he does find her, though her relatives do try to prevent them from being together anyway. And Cinderella becomes a princess. All because of a fairy godmother deciding that she had enough sitting back in the shadows and stepped in to help her.”

“So you’re calling me Cinderella?”

“Black, you can’t notice how well you fit the part. You have relatives you hate, you know you’ve got your own Prince Sarcastic Wanker, and all that fun stuff that goes with it. You just need the poofy ball gown and the glass shoes. However,” Lily looked down at their feet. “You’re feet are definitely not dainty enough.”

“Good. Fuck dainty feet. You are *not* going to fit me in glass *anything*, Evans.”

“That’s the spirit,” she laughed. “By the way, Black: *Cinderella* is one of the most popular muggle fairy tales of all time. I’d familiarize yourself with it.”

“Might as well if you’re going to keep making references,” he sighed. “Evans, how do you know *I’m* the Cinderella? Couldn’t it actually be Severus?”

“It could,” she agreed, “But you’re the one trying to change your current situations. Not him. And you asked me for help. You: Cinderella. Me: fairy godmother. Get used to it, Black.”

The song ended and Lily switched with Severus to dance with Regulus. Likely he had joined her in her mission. It wouldn’t be all that strange given how Regulus didn’t see Severus as a romantic partner.

Then again, perhaps he saw Lily that way, given the way he smiled at her...

Bugger all, Sirius thought. *How does one support their best friend when their brother’s got eyes for the same bird?*

“This is new.”

“What?” Sirius said, looking at Severus’ for the first time since the dancing began.

“Me leading,” Severus said. “It’s usually you.”

“Oh. Yeah. I suppose that is a change. Do you not...”

“It’s fine,” Severus said with a shrug.

God damn it, I want to kiss him so bad, Sirius thought, biting his lower lip. *Stare at something else.*

Forehead. Stare at his forehead.

“Unless I have a zit, I doubt my forehead’s got anything of interest,” Severus said.

Sirius blushed and glowered at the smirk crossing his face.

“Will you relax? Earlier you looked like you were going to pounce on me any moment. Cheers on that self restraint, by the way.”

“I’m not the one who’s got a metal bar in their ear,” Sirius pointed out.

Severus’ smirk widened. “I’ve a tattoo, too, but then again, so do you. Here,” Severus tapped Sirius’ waist. “Gryffindor crest, right? Not exactly original.”

“How did you—”

“Two years ago.”

“Oh.”

Yes, that would make sense.

It’d been a particularly warm day and he and the rest of the gang had decided to take a dip in the lake. His tattoo wasn’t so low that it would be missed. No. He had no reason to hide any tattoos.

“And you got yours around the same time?”

“Perhaps a little bit after you did. Far more interesting though. I always did like ocamies. Cute little buggers, aren’t they? Have one that moves around my leg. Doesn’t hurt, though it does make wanking a little...” he cut off laughing. “You’re so easy. It doesn’t move at all. It’s just a regular tattoo.”

Sirius glared at him and pinched his shoulder.

Severus winced. “Ow. That hurt.”

“You deserved it.”

“Getting pinched? That was nowhere near on the same scale as what I’ve put up from you,” Severus said. Sirius winced.

“Yeah, I suppose there are things you’re never going to let me live down, are there?”

“Not a fucking chance in hell.”

Sirius wanted to lay his head on Severus’ shoulder, but resisted. Instead, he forced a grin. “Well, then, I best work to get into heaven.”

“I don’t think heaven takes in degenerate Gryffindors.”

“Degenerate Gryffindor?” Sirius repeated, feigning hurt. “You wound me, Prince. I am a degenerate, I admit, but not when it comes to being a Gryffindor. I take that in pride. If you were to say a degenerate Black, or a degenerate asshole, I would probably be more apt to agree. Can I see it? Your tattoo?”

“Not now,” Severus said. “Later. Might as well, right?”

Sirius leaned in, returning smirk for smirk. “Are you trying to seduce me?”

Severus’ grin died. “Only you would take it that way. It’s on my *shin*, for fuck’s sake, Sirius. How is a shin in any way erotic?”

“Well,” Sirius shrugged. “I find you erotic even when you’re angry. Half the reason I’ve been an ass the last few years.”

“Oh good,” Severus scoffed. “You’ve been thinking of me as wank-material.”

“Up until recently, I didn’t think there was a problem with that. But then again, not thinking was exactly why I’ve lost you. But I will win you back.”

“Overconfident and stupidly full of yourself as usual.”

“Well, it’s either that or I turn into my father. Personally, I would rather avoid that if at all possible.”

Severus rolled his eyes. “You might take on physical characteristics, Siri, but you could never be him. I know that much. You’ve too much Gryffindor in you as opposed to his Slytherin charm even if you are just as much of an ass most of the time.”

Sirius smiled gently. “Thank you. I needed to hear that.”

“Don’t know what for. You strive to be nothing like him,” Severus said. “Still don’t know about what to think of you thinking of me as wank-material.”

“What? Not flattered?”

Severus shrugged. “It’s been pointed out that I’m not particularly handsome as opposed to some people I know,” he reminded Sirius.

Sirius pulled him away from the dance floor and away from prying eyes. “Severus, I never thought you were ugly or plain. I know a lot of people have pointed that out and perhaps I didn’t do enough to set them straight, but I never liked you because of your looks. I liked you since we met because I knew then you were someone I could stand to be around. You were smart and kind. It was never about this,” he tapped Severus’ nose, snickering at how it scrunched up at that. “But yes, I think about you when I wank. For ages, I thought we’d marry, so why not? Or am I not allowed even that?”

“What gets you up is none of my business, Black,” Severus pointed out, trying his best to maintain composure and failing as his cheeks heated.

“No?” Sirius asked, feigning innocence.

“Sirius, I do not need to know what you fantasize about,” Severus snapped. “And even if I wanted to know, this isn’t the place to discuss it.”

“Point taken, but since when did either of us given half a knut about propriety?”

“Unlike you, I actually like my mother. Hard not to be appreciative of someone who’d gone as far as she has and survived,” Severus pointed out. “I caused her more than enough trouble as it is. I don’t want to bring her any more if I can help it.”

Sirius blinked. “I don’t think your mum thinks you’re trouble, Sev.”

Caught off guard, Severus stared at Sirius. “Oh.”

“That’s it?”

“What else should I say?”

“Just show me the friggin occamy,” Sirius snapped. Severus snapped and pulled a chair over. He propped his left leg on it and rolled his pant leg up to reveal an occamy tattoo that curled around his calf. The green and blue scales each as intricate as the magenta feathers that curled just behind his knee.

“Okay, yeah,” Sirius said. “Way cooler than mine.”

“Anyone could tell you that,” Severus said, rolling his pant leg back down and returning the chair to its previous place. “I’m actually quite pleased with the design and how it came out.”

“I bet you are,” Sirius said, staring the leg in question. “Wait. Why didn’t we see it in May?”

“Because you only got as far as above my knees before McGonagall interfered,” Severus reminded him. Sirius hummed. She did catch them. By then, he’d been a bit transfixed and nearly drooling on the image of silver boxers clinging to narrow hips.

He forced the memory away, reminding himself of what it had cost him in the end.

“It was a shitty thing to do.”

“That it was,” Severus said. “And there is no amount of letters or flowers or treats that will work to get me to forgive that.”

“Would anything?” Sirius asked.

Severus glowered at him.

“Not because I want to be,” Sirius said quickly (though he really did want Severus’ forgiveness). “I know it was shitty and I accept that it’s why I lost you, but if there *was* anything that would be enough...I guess you wouldn’t tell me what it would take, but is there?”

Severus continued to glare then he smirked. “I think there is,” he said. “But I think I’ll keep that for myself, Black.” Severus moved away from him, disappearing into the crowd.

What was that look? God damn it, is it something hot? I bet it’s something hot.

Sirius banged his head against the wall. “Fuck me,” he muttered.

“I’m sure Severus would gladly oblige,” a portrait hanging above him said. Sirius glanced at it, surmising it to be one of Severus’ great-nan or something of that sort. “As much fun as it is watching—”

“Bugger off. This isn’t some drama you can just watch and get off on.”

“One can only hope. Especially with two hopeless brats such as you and him,” she sniffed. “As a word of advice, I suggest you find out exactly what would get his forgiveness. Drama and angst can only be so entertaining. After a while, you want to take the two lovers by their ears and give them a firm talking to if it means reaching a proper resolution.”

“Again: we are *not*—why am I talking to you? You’re dead!”

The portrait huffed. “Rude. Well, I’ll tell you this much: angry he is, but not as angry as you might think.” With that, she disappeared, perhaps to seek out better company and Sirius glanced at the crowd, trying to find Severus again.

“Oi, Siri,” Regulus said, pulling on his sleeve. “Deal with Potter, he’s got it in his head I’m gonna steal Lily from him.”

Lily? “Are you?” Sirius asked.

“She isn’t even *his*! So technically no.”

“Mum would weep.”

“Really?”

“Dad would have a heart attack.”

“You’re doing this now?”

“I am staying out of this. You deal with it on your own. I’m not going to choose between my brother and my best mate. If you want to fight over Evans, be my guest.”

“But even then, the contract...”

“Yeah, got to keep that in mind,” Sirius said. Regulus dug his heel into Sirius’ foot.

“Owowowowow...”

He pushed Regulus off. “What do you want me to do?”

“Whatever it takes to get Severus to want you to be his husband again so I can ask Lily out,” Regulus snapped.

“Nope. Not gonna do it.”

“Sirius!”

“You attempt dating Evans at your own peril. Do not drag me into that. I’ve my own issues to work out. Besides, James pretty...”

“Potter can go suck cock for all I care. I’m asking her out.”

“Good luck with that,” he said, patting Regulus shoulder. “Me, I’m gonna go start making bets.”

“Fuck you, Sirius!”

#

Dear Severus,

I hope you like this stationary set. It’s a bit fancier than needed, I suppose, but who doesn’t like the prettier things in life, right? They’re gold leafed and the envelopes are a little sturdier, but still the same material (or I’ll be plucking a witch’s eyes out and feeding them to her).

The journal’s got stain free, phoenix ash pages that won’t get ink smudges when you write. Also, the binding is 100% dragonhide so if there are any accidents, it won’t burn and you won’t lose your work.

The ink is dark silver and it's supposed to be readable even in the bleakest of nights.

I figured you might also appreciate a set of augurey feather quills to match.

I hope you enjoy them, even if they aren't exactly all that practical. But sometimes everyone appreciates a good spoiling. Right?

All my love,

Sirius

PS: there's a gift receipt enclosed for them if you'd rather have something else.

Severus turned to the set and picked up a quill.

I'll be buggered. It is an augurey feather. How the bloody hell did he get this? How the hell did he afford it? He glanced at the receipt tucked in the journal and tapped it against his chin thoughtfully.

Well, he was buggered.

Severus tossed the receipt and gathered the set carefully.

After all, who'd be daft enough to toss aside dragonhide anything and augurey feather quills?

Chapter 8

Severus finished gathering his new books for the alchemy class and some new standard quills (as if he was going to waste his augurey quills at *school*—those were going to stay safe and sound in his desk at home).

His mother was out with Walburga Black and Moody had insisted taking Severus along.

They bonded over a mutual interest in dark magic as well as defensive.

“You should think about joining the Auror’s lad,” Moody said, “You’ve got the makings of one.”

“Thanks, but I don’t think hunting dark wizards is for me,” Severus said with a shrug, “I’m more into developing and experimenting with new spells that may or may not be more effective than others. And potions. I think if I were to go into a specific field, I’d probably go into the medical field.”

“An equally honorable profession,” Moody said. “I’d like to see a few of those spells of yours, Severus. Anything defensive?”

“Well, more offensive, but...is there a grove or a glen nearby with a few trees? I don’t want to cast this spell and accidentally hurt people.”

“Ah. Now I’m interested. Tell me more.”

“I call it the sword spell,” he said, “Alternatively a slashing hex. It cuts an enemy down. Say you’re being attacked, it renders the attacker unable to fight back if properly cast. Cuts them like a sharp blade. If done improperly, it might cause a minor cut or kill—I’ve not used it,” he lied, swallowing as Moody narrowed his gaze. “Well, only against plants and tree life. Cleared a few trees outside the manner with it...” Moody hummed.

“But one can use it to sever a tendon or incapacitate a dark wizard.”

“Yes.”

“Or land them in the hospital.”

“There’s a counter spell,” he said. “So hospital visits shouldn’t be necessary. They’ll still be weakened from blood loss, so it should make it easier to make an arrest.”

“A stunning hex does the same without making a bloody mess.”

“But stunning hexes can be blocked. The slashing hex can break through most shield charms.”

Moody led him into a shop and Severus paused. “Well, go on, pick an owl.”

“Are you sure?”

“Would you rather use the school owls?”

That was enough for Severus to start looking around. He paused in front of the cage of a great horned owl that bobbed his head looking at Severus. He held his hand out for the bird.

“Sir! Be careful! He’s not very—”

The bird reached through and grabbed Severus' finger between its claws.

"Amazing!"

Severus opened the cage and the owl hopped out, perching on his arm and butted his head against Severus shoulder.

"That owl's been nothing but a pain in my arse for ages," the clerk said. "Barely lets me clean his cage. Well, it looks like you've found someone you can stand, you great beast."

The owl screeched and nipped at the clerk, snapping his beak. Severus snorted, stroking the bird's feathers. "Glad to tame him off your hands," he said.

From there, he gathered a cage and cloth, some food and treats, and continued to thank Moody profusely. Once home, he let the owl—much to Eileen's displeasure—explore the manor.

"At least the rodent infestation will be taken care of now," Twinkle said at dinner. Eileen sighed.

"That is true," she said.

"I think I'll name him Donovan. Actually, just Don."

Eileen shook her head. "You better take good care of Don. I don't want another incident like with that rabbit you had."

"That was Toby, Mum."

Eileen silenced. "What?"

"I thought you knew by now." She took his hand in hers.

"I'm sorry, sweetheart."

"It was ten years ago," Severus said with a shrug. He'd long gotten over it, but the loss of a pet always hurt, no matter how the loss happened or how long ago it was. He shook it away.

He's gone. He can't hurt me or mum anymore.

Severus stabbed the chicken with a fork.

"Just so you know: Don's a bit touchy. I think his old owner wasn't very nice or something. He's six years old, came in last year, and so on."

Don flew into the dining room and landed on Severus' chair, staring at the food.

Severus grinned sheepishly at his disapproving mother. "Just once?"

"No."

He set the fork down and held his arm out for Don. "I'll put him in his cage. Be back in five."

#

Sirius wished these dreams wouldn't torment him as much as they did.

Yet as tormenting as they were, he welcomed them.

He rolled over onto his stomach and seized his wand casting a silencing charm before kicking off his clothes and blankets. One hand gripped his cock and the other reached between his legs, pushing his fingers inside his cunt.

He closed his eyes, sighing, as relief washed over him. He revisited the dream, trying to remember as many details as he could hope for.

"You are amazing," Severus said, pushing two fingers inside Sirius. "It was always going to be you, Siri. Like fucking hell I'd chose someone else."

"Fuck, Sev...yes..." Severus kissed him, free hand tangling in his hair.

"You're beautiful, Siri," he growled, pulling his fingers out...

"I can't take you hurting me anymore, Sirius. This is it. I'm done trying to understand why you hurt me so much."

Sirius whined, attempting to shake the memory from his mind.

"I'm done hoping that you'd grow up and realize that what you take as just a joke hurts me. There's only so much abuse a person can take."

His breath hitched. Mood broken, he pulled the covers back over him.

"I can't love you, Sirius."

He focused on his breathing.

I'm going to get him back, he reminded himself. I will get Severus back. In the end, he grabbed his clothes and decided to take a shower and plan his next attempt.

Tap, tap, tap.

Sirius turned to the window to see an owl outside, a letter in the bird's beak. He let it in and the bird landed on top of Liam's cage.

Sirius grabbed the envelope and opened it.

I have to know how the bloody hell you got your hand on augurey feathers.

That's the only thing I can't figure out.

Still, I have to say I do like the journal, especially.

I don't know if we'll see each other again till school starts, but till then, thank you for these, Sirius.

~Severus

He read the letter again, memorizing the curve of Severus' name.

More than that, it was a thank you note.

For the gifts.

He liked them.

Sirius sat down again, smiling at the letter.

Finally, he thought. *I can get him back.*

~September 1st, 1976~

Sirius found Severus just before they entered the platform. He grinned at him.

“I don’t know about you, but I’m excited for this year,” he admitted. “Mind if I join you?”

“I suppose,” Severus said. “I’ll wait for you on the other side of the platform.”

With that he sped toward the pillar between platform 9 and platform 10. Sirius followed him, nearly banging into him on the other side as he halted his cart. Severus arched a brow and Sirius grinned sheepishly.

“Sorry.”

“Don’t be,” he said. “I’d know it was an accident if you did hurt me.”

Would you? Sirius banished the thought from his head. *I don’t want to let that kind of negativity get in my way.* He followed Severus to the train and they loaded their belongings inside, sans their owls, and entered the train, finding a compartment of their own.

They sat across from each other and Severus opened his owl’s cage to let him out. The owl settled on his lap.

“Did you get an owl recently?”

“He’s from Moody,” Severus said, stroking the feathers. “Named him Donovan. Don for short.”

“Don the owl,” Sirius said, reaching out his hand. “He’s cute.”

Don snapped his beak at him. Sirius pulled back.

“If a tad temperamental.”

Severus snorted. “Yeah, he is. But he likes me enough and I like him, so…”

Liam kept staring at Don.

Whether curious or perturbed, Sirius couldn’t tell. He opened Liam’s cage to let him out and Liam climbed out slowly, feathers flat and standing tall to appear more intimidating to Don, who seemed unimpressed by Liam’s display of aggression.

“I know I’ve said it before, but I am sorry for how I’ve treated you,” Sirius said.

Severus arched a brow at him. The train began to move.

“I’ve not changed as much as you think I have. I was stupid and arrogant and I know it. But I didn’t mean to hurt you. I know I did, so…” he swallowed.

“I love you, Severus. More than you think is even possible. I wish I was smart enough to just tell you in the first place that I missed you and wanted to spend time with you. But somehow, I got in my head that the only way to get your attention was to be cruel to you. It never entered my mind that I could just write you, tell you I missed you and wanted to see you, spend time with you. In the library or outside...so I’m sorry, Sev.”

He would not look away. He met Severus' calculating stare with a contrite one. In the end, Severus sighed and combed his hair with his hand.

"I know you're sorry," Severus said. "I know you love me. I know you're trying to make up for it."

He set Don aside, to the owl's protest, and crossed his legs. Don climbed back on him, nesting in the crossed legs happily.

"I don't know who I'm going to choose, to be honest. A few months ago I was certain I would be able to fall in love with Regulus after everything you put me through. Except...it just isn't natural for either of us. I tried to force it. I tried to make it work, but he's too much like a little brother to me. So...I'm still angry at you, but I can't in good conscious be with Reg."

Sirius fought down the urge to dance in triumph, but could not restrain the smile. "Really?"

"Why's that so strange to you?"

"It's not strange," Sirius said.

He set Liam on top of his cage and knelt before him, hands on Severus' knees.

"Rather the opposite. It's always been us. I know it hasn't felt like that for a while, but it's *always* been you and me. And you've been the one for me for as long as I've known you, Severus. From the first day onward, it's always been that way. At least for me."

Severus continued to pet Don and stared at Sirius.

"I love you, Severus, and I will continue to prove it to you for as long as I live if you will have me."

Severus huffed and picked his owl up to set him aside again, readjusting his posture. "I'm still mad at you," he said.

"I know."

"I don't know if I can trust you again."

"I will do whatever I must to earn it."

Severus stared at him, frowning. He took Sirius' hands.

"I know you will," he said. "Can we just be friends for now, though? When I'm sure I can trust you more, when I'm sure I can..."

Sirius nodded, grinning brightly. "I can do that," he stated. "I will do that. And when you're ready to go out with me, let me know."

Severus continued to stare at him. "Fine," he said. "But if you and your clique start bullying me again—"

"We won't."

"But if you do, that's it."

Sirius swallowed and nodded.

“Okay,” he said. “We won’t, but okay.”

Severus released his hands and Sirius stood. “I’m going to go change into my uniform. Would you mind watching Liam?”

“Yeah, I got him,” Severus said. Sirius thanked him and grabbed his belongings.

#

Once Sirius had gone, Severus slumped in his seat. Don turned his head around to stare at him.

“Don’t look at me like that,” he snapped.

Don looked away and engaged in a staring match with Liam.

“If I tell him I do love him, he’ll take that as a sign that all’s forgiven and it’s just not,” he mumbled against Don’s feathers. “So yes, I am going to make him squirm a little more before I forgive him entirely.”

Don flew across to Liam, who leaned back, staring at him, raising a claw in the air.

“Don, leave Liam alone,” Severus warned.

Don snapped his beak at Liam and Severus reached out to pick him up. Don struggled against his master’s hands and tried to bite after he was put back in his cage.

“Sorry, Liam,” Severus said.

Liam climbed on top of his own cage and settled there, still staring at Don.

“Dratted birds.”

“Oh my gosh! Is that a great horned owl?” Lily asked, bursting into the car. “How’d you manage to get one? I thought they were only found in America?”

“Guess he’s imported,” Severus said. “What are you doing, you mad witch?”

“Just saw a bird and wanted to say hi.”

“He’s very picky about people.”

“Well, at least Liam’s here,” she said, sitting beside Liam and holding her hand out to him. He let her pet him, still engaged in staring at Don. “You and Sirius getting along again?”

“Not sure,” he said. “I suppose we’ll see how it goes, but if he starts being an ass again...”

“Then kick his ass. What convinced you to forgive him?”

“He’s not forgiven. Not yet.”

Lily hummed, smirking at Severus. “It was the augurey feathers, wasn’t it?”

“How did you know?!”

“I saw what he left you at that party your mum threw. Some nice stationary and if I wouldn’t be working toward magizooology if I didn’t recognize that those quills were from an augurey,” she said, smirking.

“Magical Veterinarian?” He asked.

“Yep.”

“Healer, or inventor, or both.”

“Nice,” Lily said, grinning. “I kind of feel sorry for Sirius, though.”

Severus shrugged. “He deserved it.”

“I *never* said he didn’t,” she said. “Only that he sort of has some sort of...”

“Kicked puppy mentality?”

“Yes.”

“Yeah, he really does. But if I let everything he’s done go, he’ll never learn.”

“Potter’s the same way,” she said. “And he’s also a little bit...creepy at times. I don’t always feel comfortable with him. He’s trying though.”

“So is Siri, but who’s to say we should let them off?”

“Never,” Lily said, grinning. “Oh, Sirius’ back.”

Severus turned to the door as it slid open. Sirius sat beside Lily and Liam walked over to sit on his shoulder. “Put Don back?”

“He decided to get testy with Liam.”

“Ah. Thanks. Hi, Lily.”

“Hello, Cinderella.”

Severus blinked and bit his lip, trying not to laugh. Sirius glowered to hide his blush.

“Lily you are one mad witch and I don’t know how to begin reforming you.”

“I am incorrigible, I know. But you love me anyway.”

Severus blinked. “Wait...Lily, where are you from again?”

“Cokesworth,” she said. “Why?”

“Have you ever gone by ‘Lee?’”

Lily’s eyes widened. “Oh Merlin! Severus Snape?!”

“Formerly. Changed my name after everything that happened with my father,” he said, “Changed it to my mother’s maiden name.”

“Oh Merlin!”

Sirius looked at them, curious and confused. “What?”

“We used to be in the same what, kindergarten and grade school for a couple years?” Severus asked.

Lily nodded, “Lived just a couple doors down from each other, too.”

“In short,” Severus cleared his throat. “Lily and I were friends before. Best friends, even, before Mum...snapped, so to speak. She refused to go by her full name.”

Not till I was nine,” she said. “Whole time, preferred to go by Lee for so long.”

“And you just *now* realized this?”

“We grew up, and kind of forgot we knew each other before,” Severus said. “It happens. I did have a life before *that* day.”

“And I just thought you all moved away or something in the middle of third grade.”

“You were half right,” he said. He stood. “I should go change myself before we get to school.”

“We have *way* more catching up to do, Prince.”

“Later, Evans. More important things to do,” he said. He shut the door and shook his head.

This cannot be a coincidence.

#

Sirius was torn between curious and jealous.

On one hand, he could find out a bit about Severus from before they met. At the same time, why didn't he mention having friends before then? Or was it just something he didn't want to think about?

Lily slumped in her chair.

“Damn.”

“Damn?”

“Well, yeah. Just I didn't think that Severus Snape and Severus Prince were even the same person. I mean, I noticed there were very distinct similarities, but at the same time, he wasn't as...weighed down or as sad as I remember him usually being. I never made the connection! We knew we were magical since we were young, but I never thought he'd go to Hogwarts. He always wanted to get as far away as possible from Cokesworth and kind of expressed interest in going to Durmstrang or Illevormory if he could manage it.”

“Did you miss him?”

“Yes, but I supposed not everyone who comes into our lives are meant to stay. Especially classmates.”

“It never occurred to you that he was being abused at home?”

Lily's smile died. “We all knew something was wrong at his home, but we never thought it was as bad as that. In the end, I guess it got worse. And even if I had known, what could I have done? I was a little girl. There wouldn't have been anything I could do to help him even if I did know.”

Sirius stared at her. “I suppose that makes sense.” Lily nudged him.

“You healed him, in your own way, before we came to school at Hogwarts.”

Sirius averted his gaze and pulled a leg up.

“I just don’t understand how someone who loves another can hurt them?”

“I never meant to.”

“You keep saying that, Sirius, but you had to know what your actions did in some way, either consciously or unconsciously.” She shook her head.

“You should take the time to think on what it really was that bade you to hurt the very person you claimed to love. See, Sirius, even if you were in a different house, many people manage inter-house relationships very easily. How is it that you were unable to? The more I think about it, the less I think it’s the standard pigtail pulling proverb.”

“Like what? I was imperiused or something?”

“I don’t know. I doubt it. Maybe it had to do with how Severus isn’t really that liked or very popular. Psychology is still a budding field these days, but maybe it had to do with that. You don’t need to be under any spell to do bad things. A desire for acceptance can be enough to draw a person to do terrible things. Especially if it tears friends apart.”

“Why bring this up now?”

“Because I’ve been doing my own research over the summer about what could have possibly drawn you to be so cruel to Sev. In the end, you’re the only one who knows why you did all that you did. Not just to him, but perhaps to others as well. Think on it, okay?”

“Damn, Evans, you’re mean.”

“No meaner than anyone else you might know,” she said. “And it’s my own personal creed to always be honest, even if my friends would rather I’m not. How else can you be a true friend to someone?”

With that, she patted his hand.

“The more you know, the more likely you’ll be able to prevent it from happening again. Especially if you want to tie the knot with Severus one day.”

“I don’t even know how to begin doing that.”

Lily hummed and reached into her school bag, pulling forth a book. “Here you are,” she said, dropping the book in his lap.

Sirius flipped through the pages, finding them to be blank.

“A diary?”

“A journal,” she corrected. “You can write whatever you want in there. Writing what you feel can help you navigate what’s really getting under your skin. Writing can help peel the layers of your own psyche and allow you to know yourself better. This might help you figure out what *really* got you to start bullying people and perhaps help you overcome the need to hurt others.”

“I’d feel like a girl.” Lily reached over and twisted his ear. Sirius winced. “Ow!”

“There is nothing unmasculine about writing down your thoughts and feelings. Men are humans too, and therefore have a sensitive side. It’s important for men to be in touch with their sensitive side as much as it is for women to be in touch with their masculine side. Like we’re *forced* to, if it means being taken seriously by our male cohorts.

“So suck it up and start writing. Tonight if you can, Black. You don’t even *need* to do this around people. In fact, I suggest you write when you’ll have the time and the privacy to do so. And this, it’s just for you. Only those who you want can see it. No one needs to know. From here on, it’s all in your hands.

“I got you the journal as a gift because I thought it would help you figure out what’s going on in this,” she pressed her hands to both sides of his head, twisting it about. “And once you know what’s going on there, you might know yourself a little better.”

“Evans, you are strange,” Sirius said.

“I’m well aware that I’m strange. And I enjoy that title.”

Chapter 9

Sirius tossed and turned in his bed, unable to sleep despite being fatigued and with classes beginning in the morning, he really needed to sleep. In the end, he sat up and grabbed the source of his grief:

The journal.

This is ridiculous, he thought, staring at the book. *I shouldn't be so worried about this.*

With a huff, he grabbed his inkwell and quill, and snuck downstairs to the common room. He set up at the coffee table and brought the fireplace back to life before opening the book and began with the date:

September 2nd 1975

He doubled checked the clock to make sure he was correct. The clock read 2:14, so he felt reassured at that small miniscule detail that could easily be corrected.

With that, he wondered what else he could or should write.

This is ridiculous, he thought again, deciding to start with something so mundane, he felt foolish for writing it:

My name is Sirius Black and one of my friends is a complete nutter named Lily Evans. She is the one who insisted I keep a diary (though she insisted it was a journal) and so that's what's going on.

Honestly, I don't see much point to it, but she insists otherwise.

Ugh...

Did I really just write out "ugh"? I guess I could if I wanted to...

I really don't know what I'm doing, but she says it might help me figure out why I've become a bully. In particular why I've been bullying the bloke I'm in love with.

We already established that it might just be because I've been trying to get his attention outside of classes. We're in different houses, so we don't get to spend time with each other as much as we used to when we were children.

I missed him. I wanted him to pay attention to me a little more. Somewhere, in my cruelty, he just started to hate me and I didn't know it till it seemed too late.

When I found out...Fuck...I can't stand him hating me. It hurts too even think about, let alone write. He's willing to be friends again, but other than that he still doesn't trust me. He still looks at me like he doesn't really know what to expect from me.

I miss him. I miss kissing him. I miss his arms and his smile. I don't know how I could have fucked up so bad that I lost him.

Merlin, I'm being a loser, but here I am, writing my bloody feelings down in a bloody diary and trying to breathe and not to cry because I don't know if I could stop if I started.

irius.

What? I thought this was a journal?

A two way journal, apparently. Fucking bloody damn it, Lily! She gave me one herself before we got off the train.

Severus?

Yup.

Sirius' cheeks heated from anger and embarrassment in measure.

Sorry.

Don't be. I didn't know till just now. I call dibs killing Lily. You can get the leftovers.

Sirius chuckled.

I take it you read everything I already put down?

I did. I didn't mean to but...well...I couldn't help it. And as for writing out a sigh...that made me laugh. I do want to understand why you bullied me, though.

Well...

How could he explain himself when he didn't know the answer the question?

Sirius?

I'm still here.

I don't know the answer, unfortunately. I wish I did. I wish I could tell you why. I wish I could tell you what possessed me, but other than missing you, wanting you to pay attention to me.

Yeah, I was an idiot. I know that now and I know I hadn't always been the smartest when it comes to expressing ho I feel about you, but I did miss you.

I don't know why I didn't just ask if you'd spend time with me outside of classes. I don't' know why I went about hurting you to get you to pay attention to me when I never needed to before.

I don't know what happened.

Maybe I wanted approval. Or maybe I wanted to show I wasn't some pureblood snob to our upper classmates. And it just stuck and became normal. It never once occurred to me that I was hurting you, Sev. I'm certain if I did, I would have stopped.

Why didn't you just tell me to stop?

Why didn't you tell me what I was doing hurt you? I would have stopped.

Nothing. He waited and wiped his eyes dry.

I suppose I figured you did know that it hurt me, what you were doing. I thought you just didn't care. And I did think at first it had to do with the Gryffindor-Slytherin rivalry or wanting to show off how "cool" you were. Or some other shit like that.

It never occurred to me that you didn't know what your actions did to me. Not once did I think you were oblivious to how you were hurting me.

And then when you told me that the worst thing you could have ever done to me was just a joke.

I wanted to hurt you as badly as you hurt me, I suppose. I wasn't thinking that way, then, but it's the only thing that makes sense to me about why I said what I did that night. I wanted to hurt you.

So I did. I said the one thing that I could think of that would hurt you as badly as you had me. Then I acted on it. I tried to make it look like Reggie and I really would and could be a couple, but like I said earlier: he's like a brother to me.

Add to it that adorable crush on Lily, and...well, honestly, I'm rooting for him more than Potter.

Sirius laughed again.

Yeah, I'm planning to remain neutral on the matter. As if I'm going to get in between my brother and my best mate. May the best man win!

Cute.

Really? That's all you have to say?

What else could I say? I could write chuckle or snort if that's what you want, but as it is, I don't know what else I could say about that.

Fair enough, I guess.

For what it's worth, I am sorry and I will say so as much as I need to.

Again, there was no immediate response.

I'm sorry, too. I'd been just as cruel, though in a different way.

Sirius exhaled, smiling at the tight, neat script.

I'm going to say this truthfully but also hesitantly because I'm still mad at you and I don't know if I ever will not be mad at you for what you've done, but I do love you, Sirius. I kept trying to remain neutral about it in the past, but I am in love with you.

His chest expanded and he felt lightweight. Sirius grinned and he couldn't stop grinning.

Funny thing is, I never intended to tell you yet. I didn't want to give you the idea that you were totally forgiven yet, because you're not. That's the simple truth of it. I love you, but I don't think I can trust you again so soon. Not after what you put me through.

I still have some groveling to do. I already knew that. So tell me what you want. The moon? The sun? The stars? I'll get them for you. I'll do anything for you, Severus.

This isn't A Wonderful Life, Siri. I wouldn't want anything you couldn't possibly get. I don't know what I want. I don't know what could possibly fix this.

I know you're devoted to me. I know you love me. And you know I love you. I wish I could say that was enough to heal everything that's going on between us, but it just isn't.

You know, before everything started, I was going to send an owl to ask if you'd like to meet in the library because I missed you, too. Then you started bullying me and all that shit. I sent an owl asking why you would sabotage me the way you did, but I never got an answer.

Severus, I never got an owl like that. I would have replied if I did.

You didn't get the owl?

No.

But it was a school owl. I know there're a bit barmy, but they're not that bad. How did it not get to you?

I don't know. I never got the letter. That's all I can tell you. Someone might've intercepted it. The owl could've gotten confused or keeled over somehow. Anything could have happened.

All we know is that it never got to me.

And if it had, we would have stopped. I would have stopped. I love you too much to have risked it had I not been an absolute idiot.

He set his quill down, and pinched the bridge of his nose. When he looked back down, Severus had completed a lengthy response:

Sirius, you're not an idiot. A tosser. An ass. A wanker. Most definitely oblivious. But you're not an idiot. We'll figure out where to go from here. In the meantime, I do want to keep our relationship platonic until we're at a place where we can go back to a more romantic relationship.

I do advise getting a separate journal, though. Something that won't look like the one you have right now. I do think that would help you. Help us both. There's just so much muck between us at the moment, so the more we clear away, the more likely we'll be able to fix our relationship.

I'm going to go to bed now, Sirius.

Goodnight.

Sirius glanced at the clock, now reading 3:17.

He read through their correspondence, fixated on the phrases *I do love you* and *I am in love with you* in Severus' handwriting.

He wondered how he'd handle confronting Lily in the morning about the journals. It was rather Slytherin of her, tricking them both like that.

Would he thank her or would he still be upset with her?

#

Lily slid into a seat beside him. "Black."

“Evans. About that journal: you tricked me.”“You weren’t getting anywhere over the summer, so I tried something different to get you two to open up to each other. If it didn’t work, then I’ll feel bad. But if I did work, then I won’t.”

Sirius scowled at her for a moment then began filling his plate with food. “It worked.”

“Excellent.”

“But we’re still mad at you.”

“I’ll live,” she said. “We’ve only a few months more to go, so if you want your man back before the year ends...I’d try anything.”

“But did you have to trick us?”

“Would you have used it if I didn’t trick you? I know Severus probably wouldn’t if he had known. You might have, but who would know? At least this way, you can be a little more open with each other. Sometimes it helps to not have to face each other to talk things out.”

Sirius glanced at the Slytherin table, sighting Severus sitting at the table and reaching for some toast.

He faced away from them, so Sirius focused on the shoulders. He was so tempted to grab the journal and ask when Severus’ shoulders got so broad, but decided that probably would be overstepping.

He wanted so much to run his hands over those shoulders and kiss down his back or chest...

Sirius pulled away from staring at Severus’ back and focused on eating his breakfast. Anything to dim his growing arousal.

Fuck, I really need to get him to forgive me at this rate if I’m getting a blasted stiffy from staring at his shoulders, he thought. Either that or get used to cold showers.

From there, it was classes. He reviewed his schedule and compared them with Lily, James, and Remus:

Sirius Black

Mon/Wed:

10:00-11:50 Transfiguration

14:00-15:50 Defense against the Dark Arts

Tues/Thur:

9:00-10:50 Charms

23:00-1:00 Astronomy

-

-

James Potter

Mon/Wed:

10:00-11:50 Transfiguration

14:00-15:50 Defense against the Dark Arts

Tues/Thur:

9:00-10:50 Charms

15:00-16:50 Herbology

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-

Remus Lupin

Mon/Wed:

10:00-11:50 Transfiguration

14:00-15:50 Defense against the Dark Arts

Tues/Thur:

9:00-10:50 Charms

13:00-14:50 Care of Magical Creatures

23:00-1:00 Astronomy

-

-

Lily Evans

Mon/Wed:

8:00-9:50 Potions

10:00-11:50 Transfiguration

Tues/Thur:

13:00-14:50 Care of Magical Creatures

15:00-16:50 Herbology

Fri:

9:00-11:40 Alchemy

“Alchemy?” Remus asked. “I’ve not heard of that class.”

“You have to get an O to even receive an invitation to practice it. Not many make the cut. Severus did, obviously, so at least I won’t be the only student in the class.” Remus pouted and James rubbed his back.

“It’s okay, Moony. Defense is your forte and so is Magical Creatures.”

“I know, but alchemy sounds like an amazing class.”

“It does,” James agreed.

Lily laughed. “I’ll tell you how it goes when I finally get to take it. Besides, you three are all taking classes together, aren’t you?”

“With a little variation here and there,” Sirius said.

“I’m taking Herbology instead of Astronomy like these two.”

“Sleep is for the weak,” Remus said.

James rolled his eyes and Sirius snorted. As it stood, they remained the only two who knew Remus’ secret and the real reason he wanted to continue astronomy: The better he was at calculating the moon phase, the more prepared he felt when the transformation hit.

Lily stood, bag slung over her shoulder. “I’ve got to go, lads. Potions is the first class of the day.” She winked and strode off to catch up with Severus, who shoved her playfully.

Probably getting her ear chewed out for those journals, Sirius thought.

#

Once over with his rant, Lily tossed her hair behind her shoulder, pouting. “It got you to talk to him, didn’t it?”

“That’s not the point, Lee.”

“I know. I was trying to help. I didn’t mean to overstep.”

“Honestly, it doesn’t surprise me much,” Severus sighed. “You always did have a hand at sticking your nose in things it doesn’t belong.”

He refused to give her the satisfaction that it really did work. He still wanted to figure out how he went against his own creed to make Sirius squirm a little more and confessed he had come to the conclusion he wanted to hurt Sirius as much as Sirius had hurt him.

More so why he fucking told him he still loved him.

He would not tell her that. He would not give her the satisfaction. Nope. Not in a million years.

Slughorn greeted them with the rest of the class. In the room were three cauldrons with lids on them. A fourth was a small vial of golden potion. He arched a brow at it. “Felix Felicis,” he said under his breath. Lily hummed, overhearing him. “Wonder what Slughorns doing with that.”

“I’m sure he’ll explain soon.”

“Yep,” he agreed. Lily grabbed his arm, hooking her hand around his elbow, and pulled him to a table. “I’m still mad at you.”

“That has nothing to do with potions, Prince.”

“Good morning!” Slughorn said, sauntering into the room. “Everyone gather around, gather ‘round. Now! What I’ve got here are some potions that you might have heard of, though not made yet.” He removed the lid of the first potion furthest to the left. “Care to tell me what this one is, Ms. Evans?”

“Veritaserum,” Lily said. “Colorless, odorless, truth potion.”

“Excellent! Five points to Gryffindor. Mr. Prince, perhaps you could name the following potion,” he opened the next lid.

“That would be the polyjuice potion, Sir,” Severus said. “Tastes like shit and with the added ingredient of a genetic marker of another person, you can become them for an hour.”

“Mr. Prince we have discussed your proclivity for cursing in class many times before.” Lily snorted and Severus grinned unapologetically.

“I afraid I can’t make any promises, Professor.”

Slughorn sighed heavily. “Well, you are correct. And it would be redundantly unnecessary to give you points for a correct answer only to take them away for your inability to control your tongue.”

“Damn it.”

“*Prince.*”

“Okay, I’ll try. Sorry.”

Lily leaned over to him. “You know, you could be able to get into the Slug Club this year.”

Severus lowered his voice to a whisper: “Fuck. No.”

“Now, how about this one,” Slughorn said. “Free for all, whoever knows it, go ahead and answer.” With that, he lifted the lid and Severus repressed a groan as the scent of polished leather, cinnamon, and spring rain. Lily blushed beside him. He wondered if she was smelling something akin to Potter as the scents he was being assaulted by reminded him of Sirius.

He observed the potion briefly and raised a hand.

“Yes, Mr. Prince.”

“That would be Amortentia. One of the strongest love potions in the world. However, love potions are really incapable of creating real love, which cannot ever be made by any potion or spell known. The can only create obsession at best that mimics love. Amortentia is defined primarily by its white pearl sheen and the spiral steam that rises from it.”

“Correct, Mr. Prince. Five points to Slytherin,” Slughorn said. “And another five for restraining your need to curse every sentence. Now, turn to page ten of your books—yes, Ms. Evans?”

“Aren’t we going to cover the Felix Felicis?” Lily asked.

“Ah. Yes, Felix Felicis. It does not surprise me that my two best potioners would notice it.

Perhaps you two would let one of your classmates answer. Now, who here knows the properties of this particular potion?” Lily and Severus glanced around.

No one else—not Narcissa Black, nor Amos Diggory, Nor Rajesh Patil—opted to put their knowledge to the test. Severus wondered if he and Lily had intimidated their classmates.

“Anyone?”

Still no one dared to try their hand, so he nudged Lily.

“No. I’m not going to answer,” she hissed.

“Well I’m not,” Severus said. Lily and Severus stared at each other, engaged in a mental battle to give in and answer, perhaps distancing themselves from their classmates further.

“In that case, Ms. Evans.”

Severus grinned, patting her shoulder as Lily sucked in a breath and looked at Slughorn.

Lily sighed. “Felix Felicis, or Liquid Luck, is a potion that will in small quantities allow someone to engage in good spirits, good tidings, and allow everything to go your way. Unfortunately, to take it too often could cause recklessness in the person, even build an addiction to it.”

“You are absolutely correct, Ms. Evans. Five points to Gryffindor. And this little vial will be your reward for whoever brews a perfect Draught of Living Death. Now, go ahead and turn to page ten in your books, and let’s begin.”

#

Severus glared at Lily, who kept waving Felix Felicis in his face as they walked to McGonagall’s classroom. “What’s your next class?” she asked. “Are we sharing classes other than Potions and Alchemy?”

“Erm...maybe. I have Defense in the afternoon. Tomorrow is Charms then Alchemy.”

“Damn. Just the two, then.”

“Small miracles.”

“Hey!” She punched his arm. “Don’t be an arse.”

“But then what else am I supposed to be?” Severus asked smirking. Lily punched him again. “Stop that! I bruise worse than a banana.” Lily laughed loudly and she pocketed the vial of Felix Felicis. “I’ll see you at lunch, yeah?”

“We sit at different tables.”

“Beside the point,” Lily said. She looked past Severus. “Well, if it isn’t the infamous Marauders.” Severus turned to face them. He hadn’t given any thought to what he’d do if he ran into Sirius. Now he knew he wasn’t entirely ready to face him again after that. Given the blush coloring Sirius’ cheeks, it might’ve been the same.

It probably didn’t matter. Who knew if they would share classes later. He looked at Lily. “I’ll see you later, Lee. Same to you three, I’m sure,” he said.

“You’re not taking Transfiguration?” Sirius blurted.

“No, but I take Defense in the afternoon.” Severus fixed his bag and left, very much aware that they—or at least Sirius—were watching him as he left.

#

Sirius was pulled into the classroom by the back of his robes by Remus, who rolled his eyes. “You’re hopeless,” he stated.

“Maybe you’re right,” Sirius said with a smile.

“You’re as bad as him,” Remus muttered, motioning to James, who was still processing Severus addressing Lily as “Lee.” They sat down at their tables, waiting for McGonagall to enter. “At the very least you could *not* stare at Severus so intently. You look like an idiot.”

“Oi!”

“Well, you do.”

“For that, I’m going to skip meeting at the Shack.”

“Suit yourself,” Remus said without looking at him. Any retort Sirius could give was silenced by McGonagall’s entrance. As she lectured on what she expected to cover this year with them, he pulled out the journal to see if there was anything new.

Nothing.

He swallowed and took his inkwell and quill out.

I can’t wait for Defense.

He looked up at McGonagall as she continued to explain their syllabus. As the parchments flew to each of them, he looked down.

Shouldn’t you be paying attention to McGonagall?

Sirius repressed a snort, glancing at the syllabus.

I am paying attention. I just happen to be writing you at the same time. Besides, aren’t you just as guilty of it? Don’t you have your own classes to study for and all?

As if there’s much homework on the first day. But I suspect there will be much work to do in the future. I am a little unnerved to find out what they’ll pile on us. What if we don’t have any time to unwind.

I hate to think of no free time! I might end up tearing my hair out.

Or I’ll do us all a favor and find your hair oil.

Don’t you dare. You know my hair frizzes something awful without it. I’ll take oily hair over a frizzy mange any day, thank you very much.

Sirius let him rant about his precious hair oil. Let him say what he will. He used too much and as a result, too many people thought he didn’t wash it.

Sirius remembered the “frizzy mange.”

Severus started using hair oil after deciding he hated his hair when they were ten. He grew it out just to his shoulders and from there on, his hair remained a little less clean. Washed and cared for, of course, but a little unsettling to the touch and no amount of begging from Sirius would convince him to use a little less oil.

I still think you use too much.

*I know you do. But don't you think I'd have figured out how to apply it properly after six years?
It's not as bad anymore. I swear.*

Sirius recalled that he hadn't properly touched Severus' hair since, wanting to avoid getting excess oil if he could.

I'll be the judge of that.

Bite me.

Actually, don't bite me. You might take that as a challenge and I am not keen on having teeth marks on any part of my body right now, thank you very much.

"Mr. Black!"

Sirius looked up, wide eyed, as McGonagall glared at him. He shut the journal and apologized. Luckily, she only took ten points from him.

This time.

Chapter 10

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

With Defense being the last class of the day, Sirius wished it wasn't so late in the day. As it stood, he wanted to just find Severus.

What for, he didn't know, but the anticipation of just...seeing him. Being in his presence. Rereading the correspondence already recorded in the journal made him giddy and seeing him made him want to throw away his inhibitions and kiss him.

Damn whoever watched them! They could watch or leave for all he cared.

And yet he still wanted it to be Severus who initiated. Wanted him to kiss him first, to take his hands in his, and to be his lover...

Sirius slumped down in his seat, groaning tiredly. James and Remus stared at him.

"Okay, Padfoot?"

"Yeah, just wish the day would move faster, you know?"

"Pads, it's still the first day of school. You can't be tired already," James snapped.

"I didn't sleep all that well last night," Sirius said, yawning to add to his point. James narrowed his eyes at him. "What?"

"Does it have to do with that book you were writing in earlier?"

Bloody hell, Sirius thought, keeping his appearance as neutral as he could. "What does that have to do with anything?"

"Sirius."

"I am allowed to have my own secrets, Prongs. Aren't I?"

"Of course you are, Padfoot," Remus said, squeezing his shoulder and narrowing his eyes at James.

"If you like," James said. "Not that you wanted to really keep secrets before."

"Well, I am now," he said. "I hope that doesn't bother you too much."

James rolled his eyes and tore into his sandwich. Remus stabbed his maple-sage carrots with a fork. And Sirius, again, was left to his own devices. He packed a sandwich and bade goodbye to James and Remus before heading outside to enjoy the warm weather while it still could be warm.

The grounds were just starting to change color as fall crept upon it, still clinging to the green and beauty of summertime. Sirius sat at the base of a tree and ate quickly before opening the journal again to see if there was anything new.

Sirius?

I'm going to assume you got caught by McGonagall. Hope you didn't get this taken. That would be awkward and rather embarrassing, I'd think.

Sirius smiled and pulled out his writing set.

You assume correctly, Sev. Luckily she didn't take it, but warned me not to do it again or else she would. Might be beneficial to just leave it at my dorm during the day or else I'll be tempted to write you anyway, consequences be damned until they actually come.

He let the ink dry while debating whether or not to write more. Then he picked the quill up again.

Will you sit with me at Defense Class today? I know I normally sit with Prongs or Moony, but would you let me sit with you?

He waited for a reply, reminding himself that Severus very well might not have the book handy with him at the moment...

After a few minutes pass, he saw Severus' script:

That might be best for both of us. I'm usually not so easily distracted, so best to keep our journals far away from us during classes. It's tempting for me, too.

And yes, I'll sit with you at Defense.

Yep.

Two o'clock couldn't come soon enough.

#

Severus was already waiting in the Defense room, flipping through his text book. Sirius slid into the seat beside him. "Hi."

"G'afternoon," Severus said, closing the book.

From there, conversation was limited as Professor Brookshire entered the room.

"Specters," he began, "are non-corporeal creatures that feed off of fear or chaos. These creatures are non-corporeal non-beings. There are perhaps numerous types of specters, but only three are known to the world at this time. Who can name one of them?"

Hands flew in the air. Brookshire looked at Remus. "Mister..."

"Lupin," he said. "Poltergeists are sentient specters. They are known to cause mischief and chaos, primarily fueled by adolescent emotions. They are not easily gotten rid of, for instance, there is no way for anyone to get rid of Peeves outside of Hogwarts being abandoned."

"Excellent. Five points to Gryffindor. That's one specter: a poltergeist. Peeves is an excellent example. Who can name me one of the other two known specters...you in the back, what's your name?"

"Longbottom," he said. "Boggarts are also specters. Non-sentient as opposed to sentient, and they prefer fear as opposed to chaos. The *Ridikkulus* charm can defeat it, even confuse it as it enables us to dispel our fears."

“And another five points to Gryffindor. And the last specter, our subject matter for the next month. Who knows of it?”

Remus and Severus both raised their hands. Brookshire looked at Severus and nodded.

“Your name?”

“Prince,” Severus said. “The last specter is the Dementor. They suck goodness and life. It’s impossible for anything to really thrive when Dementors are about. Plants will wither, creatures flee, and *we*—any being be it a house elf, wizard, witch, goblin, hag, so on—all feel cold and drained of motivation. If anyone has suffered from depression, then they might have an idea of what it feels like to be in the presence of these creatures. The primary spell for expelling Dementors would be the Patronus Charm. Usually they are found at Azkaban Prison. If around Dementors for a long period of time—though the period in question is unknown—a wizard or witch can lose their magic as well as their mind.”

“Spoken like someone who knows firsthand,” Brookshire stated, staring at Severus. Sirius took Severus’ hand under the table and gave it a squeeze before letting go.

“I’d rather not discuss that, Sir,” he said.

Brookshire hummed and awarded him five points for his contribution before beginning his lecture on Dementors. Severus rubbed the back of his neck, head bowed over his notebook.

Sirius half wanted to ask him what was wrong. Clearly what Brookshire had said got to him in a way that Sirius could only partially understand. He wanted to comfort him if he could—if Severus would let him.

As the class continued, so did Brookshire’s treatment toward Severus. He eyed him suspiciously and there was almost a cruelty to his gaze whenever it fitted on him. When the class ended at last, Sirius followed him.

“Are you okay?”

“I’m fine,” Severus said. “I’ve had worse experiences.”

“Maybe, but not from a teacher,” Sirius stated. “I wouldn’t want to deal with it.”

“Neither would I, but I can’t help being disliked. If someone dislikes me, they dislike me and my best hope is to stay on their good side as much as possible.”

“But it’s not fair.”

“Since when has my life ever been fair?” Severus asked, staring at Sirius. “My father beat me. My mother killed him and went to prison. I agreed to an arranged marriage and half the time I wonder why fuck I ever agreed to that! I wonder why I thought my freedom was less than my life!”

Severus leaned against the wall. “I’m sorry. I don’t mean it that way. I know you’re life’s been decided for you too since then, so I’m not blaming you. I don’t...know...”

“I think it would have gotten to anyone eventually,” Sirius said, squeezing his shoulder for a brief moment. Then he leaned against the wall beside him. “But even if it has been decided for us, we agreed. We accepted it and agreed to their terms. I hate my family. I think they’re horrid. You know I think that they’re horrid. But there is one thing they did that I am grateful for and that is bringing you into my life. I know I have said it before many times, but I’ll keep saying it till you

believe me: I love you, Sev.”

Severus turned to him. “I know you do,” he said.

“I know I have lots of work to do still, but I’ll do what I must to prove that you’d have chosen me anyway.”

Would he have though? Would I?

The look on Severus’ face suggested he was thinking the same thing. Sirius liked to think he would have, but neither could really say one or the other.

Sirius shoved his fists in his pockets to prevent from embracing him. “Have you any other classes today?”

“No,” Severus said. “You?” Sirius shook his head, swallowing. “Well, I’m starving. I’ll write later.”

“Same,” Sirius said the same moment Severus walked away down the hall. *What was that*, Sirius asked himself, a burning anger and hurt in his chest as he watched Severus disappear among the crowd.

Remus nudged him. “Brookshire,” he whispered. “He was watching you two. I don’t know what his issue is with Severus, but I’d be careful around him.”

Sirius looked behind him at their new defense teacher. “Is that why he just ran off?”

“Maybe,” Remus said, pushing him ahead. “Come on, let’s go eat. I don’t want to be in the hallway all evening.”

#

Finally finished with homework, he picked up the journal and flipped to where they stopped, except there was a new entry:

Brookshire should change his name. Dickshire works better for him.

Severus chuckled and picked up his quill.

Dickshire does work better for him. Or Creepshire. How’s homework going?

Only you would change the subject to homework. I’m done for the night. I’m sure you’re done, too. Otherwise you probably wouldn’t be writing me.

Well, I have a feeling we don’t want to talk about asshole teachers. Wouldn’t want them finding this and getting mad because we insulted them.

I think as long as we keep it off our person, we’ll be fine. Hey, would you be pissed if I serenaded you?

Excuse me?

Would you be pissed if I serenaded you? Lily’s latest idea in what options I have for wooing you.

Erm... probably not about the serenading itself, but from the embarrassment of you singing to me.

This school isn't exactly known for its privacy.

***I wouldn't mind them knowing I am willing to sing to you. I do mind that you'd react negatively.
What if it wasn't a cheesy song?***

*The whole point of romancing a person is to risk being cheesy. Sometimes that's the only way to
get it right.*

So you like it when I'm cheesy?

You're always cheesy, Black. Always have been.

It's part of my charm.

Go ahead and tell yourself that.

***The first time I saw your face, I thought the sun rose in your eyes and the moon and the stars
were the gifts you gave to the dark and the endless skies—***

What are you doing?

Serenading you.

That does not constitute as serenading.

Then I am sending you poetry. Not exactly original poetry, I admit, but still.

I'd rather have original poetry.

In that case how about...

Roses are red. Violets are blue. I'm a wanker who's terrible at this, how about you?

Severus shook his head, hand covering his grin. If anything, these journals really had helped, even if he didn't appreciate Lily's deceit. He

There is nothing on earth that will get me to recite or write poetry on a whim.

Please?

No.

Pretty please?

You're insane.

Well established, that is. Just give it a go. I won't show it to the others.

Ah, yes, the others. How do I know you aren't already showing this to them?

Tsk, tsk.

Yes, I did write out clicking my tongue.

And I have no interest in showing this to James and Remus. James might not like it, but this is

for us. I spend enough time with them as it is being in the same house and year and all that. So I promise that I am not letting them read this nor are they reading over my shoulder.

In that case:

There is nothing you can do to make me write poetry

Save if I were to experience ludicrous behavior in longevity.

You make me mad in both respects.

I wonder why I even aspect

To ponder your behavior

As you build up and break down with the same fervor.

Your lips profess to love me

But your actions, they hate me.

So tell me truly for once with your hands

And maybe then I can understand.

While thinking about what else to add to this silly thing, Sirius responded:

My hands are fools, don't you know?

They hurt and they insult wherever they go.

No thought they have, but a mind of their own.

So my lips attempt to make what was wrong

Better, knowing that there is little that can be done,

But they will keep trying no matter how long.

My heart is yours to do with what you will.

I hope I have yours still.

But if you wish, I will attempt to answer your request

For at your will am I behest

Severus covered a laugh with a cough, but Sirius was not yet done.

Tell me what you want of me,

And I will make it be.

The moon, the sun, the stars,

Go ahead and tell me.

Let me prove that I can make you happy,

Dearest love of my life,

Let us end this strife!

To Hogsmeade I will be

If you want to be with me.

Severus stared at the last two lines and shook his head.

Did you just ask me out?

Maybe.

Sirius.

What? I love you. I know you love me, too. I want to be with you. How can I gain your trust again if you won't let me close?

He had a point.

Severus exhaled slowly before penning his response.

Okay.

Really?

Yes. I'll go to Hogsmeade with you. But Sirius, the first Hogsmeade weekend isn't for a few weeks.

Screw that. Meet me at the Hump-backed witch Friday night. I know you're confused. Trust me. It'll make sense later.

I hope so, because you're making no sense.

I promise it'll make sense eventually. You'll like it. Prongs is coming. I got to go.

Till next time, then.

Bye, Sev.

#

Sirius slid into the seat beside Severus at Charms as well, earning a frown from James. Remus grabbed James' arm and pulled him away, whispering to him harshly. Sirius would figure out what was going on later, for now, he needed to gain self control.

When Severus accepted his request to go to Hogsmeade, he nearly whooped and resisted any need to jump up and punch the air, or turn into a dog and chase his tail. He waited to do that till he was in the safety of his room.

James and Remus congratulated him before he gave in, acting like an absolute lunatic, but at least as a dog, it seemed cute rather than weird.

“Have you class tomorrow?” Sirius asked. “If not, we could in the morning.”

“I’ve alchemy tomorrow morning,” Severus said.

“Damn.”

“But I’m free the rest of today if you want to study Transfiguration and Charms.”

Study date.

Blech.

But Sirius would take it. He nodded. “Love to.”

“Doubtful, but unless you’ve any better ideas...”

“No. I don’t. Library it is. I’ll bring snacks.”

“Or we could have lunch after class.”

“In the kitchen.”

Severus arched a brow at him. “Getting ahead of yourself, don’t you think?”

“Am I?” Sirius asked, grinning. “Do you mind it that much?”

Severus snorted and rolled his eyes, averting his gaze from Sirius. Sirius decided not to point out the faint blush to Severus’ cheeks. He probably wouldn’t like that so close to class starting.

Hell, he probably wouldn’t like that, period.

In the end, Sirius left him alone, deciding to focus on Flitwick’s lecture instead.

#

“Can I touch your hair?” Sirius asked. Severus paused, ink bleeding into his notebook. He removed the quill and set it down, looking at Sirius.

“Excuse me?”

“May I touch your hair? You said it’s not as bad as it looks, so...I wanted...if you don’t want me to, just say so.” Severus stared at him just enough for Sirius to nearly look away.

“Maybe some other time,” Severus said before turning back to his notebook. He frowned at the inkblot, trying to block out any thoughts relate to Sirius and Sirius’ fingers in his hair. It was almost an erotic thought...

Severus inhaled and he took Sirius’ hand in his other, squeezing gently. Sirius squeezed back before lacing his fingers between Severus’ and kissed his knuckles.

He let go immediately.

“Sorry,” he mumbled. Sirius jumped up and gathered his books. “I’ll see you tomorrow afternoon.”

“Siri?” Severus took his wrist. “What’s wrong? Look at me.”

Sirius looked up. “I shouldn’t have kissed you.”

“That’s what this is about?”

“I don’t have the right to kiss you.”

“It wasn’t like you kissed my lips. A kiss on the hand is...different.” *Friends don’t kiss each other*, his subconscious supplied unhelpfully. *Well, we never were conventional friends.*

“It doesn’t matter. I shouldn’t kiss you. Not without your permission.”

“Never stopped you before,” Severus said. “Honestly, I half thought you’d snog me after the whole journal thing started outside the Transfiguration Classroom.”

Sirius closed his eyes. “I didn’t want to kiss you. I mean I do want to, but I just...I wanted you to initiate.”

“So if I kissed you first, you wouldn’t be panicking?”

“Yes.”

Severus hummed. “Then why did you ask me out to Hogsmeade?”

“I don’t...to move things along, maybe?”

“Sirius, you’ve always been more of the initiator. I’ve always been okay with that. It took a little bit of pressure off of my shoulders in the whole courting side of what’s expected of us. I could always count on you to make the first move.”

“You never made it seem like you liked it.”

Severus hummed. “I did, didn’t I?”

“Sev,” Sirius sighed. “Please let go.”

“Do you have a class?”

“No. My last class today’s Astronomy. That’s not till eleven.”

“Then are you planning to do something with your friends?”

“Not...presently...”

“Then we can discuss this. Or is it that hard for you to talk to me without a book between us.”

“We received that book two days ago.”

“We did. Look, at this point, I highly doubt we’ll figure out what happened to the letter I sent, but I am not going to marry you if our more important conversations are held in the safety of opposite rooms in a two-way journal. We have to discuss these things face to face, Sirius.” Severus rested his hand on Sirius’ cheek. “Look at me.” Sirius’ gaze met Severus’. “I do love you, Sirius. I don’t think I ever didn’t. Until I met you, I wasn’t living. Not really. It was more surviving. Same for my mum. We were just trying to survive. One day at a time. And that’s what I thought my life would always be: surviving one day at a time without knowing if I would ever be strong enough to live. But before we started school, I figured out what it was like to actually live because of you.”

“I don’t deserve you.”

“Definitely not, but I’m sure there are things I’ve done that hurt you that would disqualify me as well, don’t you agree?”

“No.”

“Sirius, I’m not perfect.”

“I know you’re not. I’m certainly not perfect either. But...you’ve always been perfect for me and I nearly lost you because of my stupidity. I don’t want to risk breaking it all apart again.”

Severus shook his head. “As hard as you’ve been trying? I think you’ve learned your lesson, Sirius. So don’t run from me over something as silly as a kiss on my hand.” Sirius sat back down, looking all too pitiful for Severus’ liking. “You’re such a brat, Siri.”

“But you still seemed to hesitate when I kissed you, or when I asked you to kiss me. I’m not saying this to guilt you or anything. Promise. I just want to know why.”

Severus hummed. “I suppose it had more to do with my past. Toby wasn’t exactly a nice man, nor a good man, nor even an honorable man. So, I guess...I don’t have very good role models of what a husband is supposed to do or what he should be like. I know I don’t want to be like your dad and I certainly don’t want to be like mine. But I don’t know how. I think any hesitation I have is because I don’t know how to act when it comes to kissing you.”

“Certainly didn’t have an issue of kissing Regulus,” Sirius said with a pout. Severus hummed. He had a point. Maybe it wasn’t that he was shy or uncertain. Maybe it was something else. Sirius sat down again and Severus released him.

“Maybe I have my own soul-searching to do as well, then. We’d been cruel to each other for too long, Sirius. I think we both can just chalk it up to our maturity or lack thereof, but we’re a couple of fucked up bastards if ever there was one.”

Sirius snorted. “I have to agree. I never wanted to lose you.”

Severus hushed him, taking Sirius’ head in both hands and tilting his head up to meet his. “You didn’t. Not really. I’m still so angry at you, Sirius, but I’m not going to leave you again.” Sirius embraced him, breathing shakily. “I love you, Siri. I know I’m not good at showing it, but I do love you.”

Sirius tightened his grip around his waist. Severus ran his hand through Sirius’ hair, trying to comfort him as best and as platonic as possible, but it almost...hurt. It felt like a dull ache in his chest to see Sirius so broken. It wasn’t like him. Sirius was the happy one. The strong one. The rebellious one. He wasn’t supposed to break.

“You’ll be okay,” Severus said. “We both will be.” Sirius nodded, and Severus sat back down beside him, conjuring a handkerchief and tissues. “I’m here now, aren’t I? You have my attention and you didn’t need to be an asshole to get it. We’ll be okay. I know we’ll be okay.” He kissed Sirius’ forehead. “Don’t cry anymore, Siri. Please?”

Sirius swallowed and nodded. They turned back to their books and resumed their studies.

<http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/robertaflack/thefirsttimeeverisawyourface.html>

Chapter 11

Chapter Notes

New Tags. check'em out. :)

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

“I know he’s your man and all, Padfoot,” James said, “But you’ve been acting off lately.”

Sirius rolled his eyes.

“What?”

“You’ll have to get over that, mate,” Sirius said. “You’re my best friend and all, but Severus is...”

“More?” James asked.

“Yes,” Sirius said. “More.”

James hummed and sat down.

“I’m sorry if I’ve been an arse the last couple days, mate. I know I have. I guess I’m just used to you being with me and Moony. Got to remember that you and Sev are trying to fix your relationship and that I can’t just go about mucking it up again.”

Sirius arched a brow. “You? James you didn’t muck anything up.”

“I was the one who attacked him,” James said. “I attacked him. That’s the truth of it. I may have done it for you, Sirius, but in the end...I know you and Severus are going to be together. No one doubts that. I guess I feel left out. But given how dedicated you are to getting Severus back, I should at least be just as tenacious getting Lily to love me as much as I love her.”

Sirius gripped his shoulder. “James, would you rather I treated you the way Severus and I treat each other?”

“No.”

“Then don’t feel left out. And best of luck. As long as my brother is also interested in Lily Evans, I’m not getting involved. Too many bad situations.”

“I suppose that is true. Fine. You just play referee for now.”

“Thanks,” Sirius snorted. “I love you, mate. Just not the same way I love Sev.”

“Thank Merlin. Cool. Hogsmeade this weekend?”

“I’ve plans.”

“Oh?” James leered. “Do these plans involve Prince Tall-Dark-and-Lanky?”

Sirius glared at him.

“Have fun. I want details. Not too many details, though. No need to know who stuck what where.”

Sirius grabbed the pillow behind him and smacked James with it.

“Watch the glasses!”

“Then don’t antagonize me, Potter!”

James grabbed the pillow and ripped it from Sirius’ hands.

“Death by pillow is pathetic and I deserve an honorable death, sir,” he said.

“Fine, we will duel. However, Potter, it will have to wait. I have astronomy class in twenty minutes and I best get going.”

“Then go, you scurvy dog!”

“Dog, yes. But I’m quite sure I don’t have scurvy.”

“Fleabag.”

Sirius flipped James off and left with Remus.

#

Severus entered the alchemy classroom.

Charts lined the walls, illuminated by candles. The blackboard, in neat, readable script read *Professor Seneturim*. He took a seat close to the board, but not so close to be noticed.

Lily sat beside Severus, bouncing in her seat.

“Hyper active, aren’t you?” he asked, arching a brow at her.

“We’re going to learn a new kind of magic. How can you *not* be excited?”

“I’m excited,” Severus assured her. “I just happen to also have composure.”

The door opened and a woman stepped out of the office. She was tall and gave off a regal image. Her ebony hair was pulled back in a ponytail and she fixed them with a dark glare.

“When I call your name, stand,” she commanded. “Knott.”

He stood.

“Newport.”

A witch in the back stood up.

“Evans. Broderick. Prince. Prewitt. Jones. Burbage. Babbling. Masterson.”

She looked up and smirked.

“You ten were selected from the top percentage of the school. The best and brightest. Some of you may even be Slugs.”

Lily blushed.

“But this is no social club. Here you will learn the grand art of alchemy. Alchemy is the magical art of changing one thing into another. There are, however, rules to alchemy.

“Number One: you cannot change an item to be a completely different item. Vegetable cannot become mineral, and so on.

“Number Two: you cannot use more than what you are given, also known as the law of Equivalent Exchange.

“And the Third law is absolutely pantomime: creating humans or experimenting on humans is forbidden.

“The breaking of any of these laws will result in automatic failure and you will be dismissed from the class. You may take your seats.”

Lily leaned to Severus. “I just got chills.”

Severus showed her his forearm. He had goosebumps.

“Alchemy is a wandless magical art,” Seneturim said. “Instead, it requires chalk and focus. Not unlike brewing potions, but potion based alchemy is our third trimester. Right now, we will focus on the basics of alchemy.”

With a wave of her wand, syllabi flew threw the air and landed in front of them. Severus picked up the parchment.

Brief History of Alchemy, The Rules, and the Taboos

Transmutation Circles

Potion Based Alchemy

“For now, we will focus on the history of Alchemy...”

#

An owl situated outside the classroom flew over to Severus and handed him a letter. Lily peered over his shoulder and he pushed her away.

“Go on, Lee. None of your business.”

“Tell Sirius I said hi,” she said, smirking back at him.

He ignored her, opening the letter. Inside was a thick parchment and a note attached to it:

I’m on the third floor. That’s page 3 of the map. To activate it, tap it with your wand and say “I solemnly swear I am up to no good.” See you in a bit. – Sirius.

Severus followed the instructions and went on his way to the third floor. Once there, he looked through the map to see which direction to go. Once he could see Sirius, he quickened his steps and handed him the map.

“Is this how you managed to sneak around so much?”

“Yep.”

“I want to know how you made that.”

“Not just me,” Sirius said, blushing. “James and Remus had a hand, too.” He tapped the map. “Mischief Managed.”

He shoved the map in his robe pocket and turned to the statue of a humpbacked witch. He tapped it with his wand and the witch moved to the side, revealing a tunnel.

“That is cool,” Severus said, awed.

“Leads to the cellar of Honeydukes,” Sirius said. “You coming or not?”

“I’m coming,” Severus said, entering the tunnel.

Sirius followed and the statue moved back into place.

“You know, this reminds me that this castle was actually designed to protect the students from unfriendly passerby. Wouldn’t surprise me that there are so many secret tunnels and the like.”

“You’re still impressed.”

“Hard not to be. Some of them would have caved in ages ago. To see one that’s still in this condition is awe inspiring.”

“Only you, Prince, would see a trip to Hogsmeade as a chance to admire architecture.”

“You’re telling me you weren’t awestruck by this thing when you first found it?”

“I was, but after three, four years...tends to not have the same effect as before,” Sirius said. He took Severus’ hand in his.

“Can I kiss you?” he asked.

Severus stared at him.

He pulled Sirius over to him and pressed his mouth to Sirius’, hands pressed to Sirius’ waist. Sirius laid his hands on Severus’ shoulders, returning the kiss. Severus growled, nipping Sirius’ lower lip, and pushed him against the wall. Sirius moaned, knees buckling beneath him.

They were alone.

No one around.

Fuck...

This wasn’t like their usual kisses.

It’s heated, passionate, hungry...

Sirius rolled his hips, pressing their pelvises together. Severus tightened his grip on Sirius’ hips, relishing the heat and arousal. Slowly their breathing evened and the kiss slowed.

“Do you still want to go to Hogsmeade?” Sirius asked.

Severus looked up at him. “Yes. Lead the way.”

Sirius checked the cellar before moving the trap door. He helped Severus out and they snuck out of the employees' area to the store front. Sirius grinned at the shop keeper, who sent him a glare and her shoulders dropped.

"So soon?"

"You love me and you know it," he said.

Severus rolled his eyes and scrounged through the selection of fizzing whisbees. Sirius joined him and handed him a basket.

"Get as much as you want. My treat."

"Don't tempt me," Severus said, taking the basket.

"I tempt you? Dare I ask you which way?" Sirius asked, grinning. Severus punched his shoulder lightly. Sirius snorted and they went around gathering as much sweets as they liked.

"Do care not to make yourselves sick," the shop keeper muttered, glaring at Sirius.

"Where's the fun in that?"

"Come on, you nutter," Severus said, pulling him outside. "I'd like to get some more ink while I can."

"Ink? You agreed to go to Hogsmeade for *ink*?"

"You never know what will happen. You might spill it. Someone might steal it. Loads of shit could happen. So yes. I want to get more ink. And a quill knife sharpener."

"Whatever you want, Baby."

"Don't call me 'baby,'" Severus growled, glaring at him.

Sirius pouted.

"The hurt puppy look doesn't work on me, Siri."

"Maybe not, but I can try," he said, taking Severus hand in his and squeezing it. "So, next stop: book shop." He pulled Severus over to the bookstore. "Maybe they've a new crossword puzzle."

"Crosswords?" Severus asked, trying not to laugh.

Not out of mockery.

The idea of Sirius playing crosswords, bent over the paper and brow furrowed in thought, tongue sticking out of his mouth was somewhere between hilarious and cute.

"I happen to be smarter than I look, Love."

"I know you are, for all that you're a knucklehead," Severus said. "I just don't remember you being intersted in crosswords."

"Have you ever felt your brain turn to mush before? I have. Crosswords, Sodoku, Mad Libz...they help keep a wizard sharp."

“Mad Libz is Muggle, Sirius,” Severus stated. “The likelihood that you’ll...oh.”

Severus waved the folio, slapping it against his shoulder. “Creator of Mad Libz was a wizard. A Muggle Born one, I think.”

“Cool.” He looked through the selection of Mad Libz. “I usually don’t take the chance to look around much.”

“Really? I thought you’d know this place inside out.”

“Not my usual haunt in Hogsmeade. I usually just stick to the Hog’s Head talking to Aberforth about shit. Bloke’s brighter than people give him credit for.”

“Aberforth? That old weird bloke that runs it?”

Severus shrugged. “He’s not as weird as Dumbledore. I’ll introduce you if you like. Mind, it really isn’t that sanitary, but it’s less crowded than the Broomsticks.”

Sirius hummed thoughtfully. He shrugged. “Why not? If you like him, then I like him.”

“Goof.”

“You know it and you love me anyway.”

#

“Broomsticks’ is a better place for a date, Prince,” Aberforth said as he brought them dusty bottles of butterbeer.

“And too crowded. Everyone goes there, Abe,” he said.

Aberforth huffed and stormed off, waving his goat away from the cheese on the counter.

“I see why you prefer it here. Quieter so you can study, isn’t that right?”

“Partly. Also, he doesn’t mind me experimenting here and there with my own spells. He certainly doesn’t mind as long as I put it back. Actually he offered me a job when I graduate since I’m here a lot anyway.” Sirius hummed. “I haven’t decided if I will take that up yet, but it’s worth considering.”

“Well, it’d certainly be cleaner.”

“That’s a plus. The minus is the quality of food, but also easy to take care of.”

Sirius wiped the dust off his bottle and took a swig. He wrinkled his nose.

‘Use a cooling charm first. *Tergeo*.’

The dust removed from the bottles.

“*Frigo*.”

A thin layer of ice encased the bottle. And a little steam flowed from the mouth of the bottle.

Blushing, Sirius cleaned and cooled his own bottle. He was glad for it because *now* the butterbeer tasted refreshing. He set the bottle down.

“Yeah. I think you should take that offer. Not everyone gets a job offer right after they graduate.”

“True, but is bartending and waitering really my forte? Not really. That’s more your speed.”

“Aberforth’s as old as Dumbledore. Both of them could kick the bucket any day, right? You work here, maybe take over, make it a respectable establishment and kick the Broomsticks in the dust as Hogwarts favorite haunt. Maybe startle a few pure blood pansies while we’re at it.”

“Like your parents.”

“They can go bugger themselves for all I care.”

“Sirius, they *do*.”

Sirius winced. “Don’t remind me. That’s a bad...obliviate me! I don’t want to think of my parents...ugh.” He flailed, making Severus laugh.

#

Severus leaned against the fence surrounding the Shrieking Shack.

“You know, it’s not as old as people think,” Severus said. “It just showed up before we started attending Hogwarts.”

Sirius laid his head on his shoulder.

“So how can it be haunted? What’s really going on in there? You know what I mean?”

“I do,” Sirius said.

He wasn’t sure how much to divulge. After all, it wasn’t his secret to tell. It was Remus’. He crossed over onto the property.

“Shall we take a look?”

Severus shrugged and joined him. Together they approached the shack and forced the door open. Sirius made a mental note to reinforce it before the next full moon so that Remus wouldn’t be able to get out.

They walked up the stairs and Sirius followed Severus around, letting him take the shack in on his own. Claw marks from Remus and Sirius cut into the woodwork. Holes from James’ antlers. The tattered blankets and curtains hung over.

“Damn, there’s so much fucking dust,” Severus said, coughing.

Sirius cast a cleaning charm.

“Thanks.”

“Always, Babe.”

“I don’t like it when you call me that,” Severus snapped.

Sirius wrapped his arms around his waist and kissed his cheek.

“What about Love? Honey? Sweetheart?”

“Shut it.”

“But you’re smiling,” Sirius said. He kissed his shoulder. “You know, there’s no one around here either.”

“You’re point?” Severus asked.

“We’re alone again. No possible bystanders. And I was wondering if you would you kiss me again. Like you did in the tunnel?” he asked. “You never kissed me like that before today.”

“I guess it’s easier for me when it’s just us without the possibility of being walked in on,” Severus said. He looked around, as if instinctively expecting others to burst through and ruin the mood. Sirius hoped that Remus and James would leave them be.

“Over there,” he said, pointing at the broken bed.

He waved his wand, repairing and cleaning it. Sirius’ heartbeat pounded erratically.

“One day, I think I’ll be ready to shag you. Not today, too soon, I think for that.”

Sirius agreed, though he would certainly not stop it if it went that way.

“But if you’re okay with it, could we just lie down and talk? Or snog.”

“Both,” Sirius said.

They approached the bed and laid down facing each other.

The nostalgia of it was intoxicating.

They hadn’t done this since Severus moved back in with his mother to Prince Manor. When the Blacks took care of Severus, sometimes he would sneak into Sirius’ room after a bad day, or vice versa. They’d just lay next to each other and talk, cry, and comfort each other.

Sirius moved closer to Severus, biting his lip. Severus took Sirius’ hand in his own and squeezed it. The intimacy of it was almost...

Well, Sirius didn’t recall it being this intimate when they were children. Perhaps the maturity they held now contributed to it. The act wasn’t anywhere near as innocent as it used to be.

He closed the distance further, pressing his lips to Severus’ tentatively.

Severus responded kindly, letting go of Sirius’ hand to run his fingers through his hair.

Sirius bit Severus’ bottom lip gently, sucking on the red skin of the lip.

Severus groaned, tightening his grip on Sirius’ hair. He licked the seam of Sirius’ lips, which parted obediently to let Severus tongue slide inside. He met Severus’ tongue with his own, letting them dance in his mouth between heated moans escaping their throats.

Severus’ tongue retreated back into his mouth and he eased Sirius to lay on his back.

Their legs tangled together and Sirius stared at him as Severus hovered above him. With their lips again slotted together, Sirius closed his eyes. He ran his hands over Severus’ chest and stomach, pulling at the grey and green jumper to slide his hand underneath. Severus flinched.

“Hands are cold,” he said against Sirius’ lips.

Sirius hummed, moving his hand up to Severus’ chest, flicking his finger over his nipple. Severus groaned, grinding his hips down. Sirius nipped at Severus’ lips, drawing circles around the bud and feeling it harden. Severus sat up on his knees, divesting his robes and jumper.

Sirius followed suit, letting his jumper join Severus’ beside them. Their fingers fumbled over their shirts, frustrated by the buttons. At last, their chests were revealed and Sirius gripped Severus waist, pressing his lips to one of Severus’ breasts, kissing, licking, and nipping at the skin.

He pulled away. “Aren’t we going to fast?” he asked.

“Probably,” Severus said. And yet, he pushed Sirius back down and ground their hips together. Sirius gasped, arching his back.

“Fuck...” He gasped. “Sev...” Sirius shivered, an orgasm building below. “Shit, I’m gonna come.”

“Same,” Severus growled.

Sirius laced his fingers in Severus’ hair (he vaguely recognized that he certainly had learned not to use so much hair oil, but it was still a little too slick for his liking). He rolled them over so to lie on top of Severus.

“Don’t want to come,” he said. “Not yet.” Severus licked his lips and reached for his robes. He retrieved wands and banished the rest of their clothes. “Sev? What—”

“I want to see it,” he said. “I want to see your cunt, Siri.” He gripped Sirius’ ass, moving them to his vaginal opening. “Please.” Sirius climbed off and let Severus get behind him. He bowed his head, blushing, as Severus pressed his fingers against the folds, spreading them apart and running his fingers over the sensitive skin. “Fuck, Siri...”

Sirius pushed back against Severus’ fingers. “Sev, fuck me...” Severus cursed behind him.

“I don’t want to hurt you,” he whispered, running the tip of his cock over Sirius’ entrance. “Are you absolutely *certain* you want this.”

Sirius flattened down to turn onto his back and wrapped his legs around Severus’ waist, rolling them over. “I’m certain,” he said. “Are you?”

Severus swallowed. Then he nodded. Sirius gripped Severus’ cock and slid down till he was fully seated. Severus sucked in air, gripping Sirius’ hips tightly.

“Sev?”

“Too much. I’m gonna come too soon. Shit...”

Sirius bit his lip and rolled his hips experimentally, lifting off Severus’ hips momentarily before falling back down. He hoped that was what he was supposed to do anyway, given some of the talk he overheard in the boy’s shower room after Quidditch Practice some days. Severus’ head rolled back, fingers still digging into Sirius’ skin. “*Fuck!*” He shouted. A couple more rolls of his hips and he could feel Severus’ release inside him.

Sirius licked his lips and gripped his cock, giving it a few languid strokes. Severus watched entranced. His skin hummed and tingled and he could feel it. He came gasping and squeezing his muscles around Severus’ flaccid, sensitive cock still buried inside him.

Severus hissed, arching his back and digging his nails into Sirius' skin again.

Once sated, Sirius laid back down over him, kissing Severus' chest.

"Fuck, that was...Fuck..."

"That's encouraging," Sirius said, smiling. As the lust ebbed, dread filled him. "Sev, not that I regret shagging you and all, but..."

"Too late to take it back now," Severus said. "I get it too, but as far as I'm concerned, we'd have fucked eventually." He rolled them over to the side, pulling out with a hiss.

"What if I get..." He couldn't finish the sentence, placing his hand over his stomach. Severus covered his hand with his own.

"If you're parents have an issue with that, then they're worse than I think. My mum won't be happy, but she'll get over it once she realizes she's going to be a grandmother. Besides, the chances of getting pregnant on the first try is very rare. It happens, but it's rare. I love you, Siri. Always have. If our family starts early, then it starts early."

He kissed Sirius, then scooted down and kissed Sirius' abdomen just below the belly button. Sirius ran his fingers through Severus' hair.

"If I do get pregnant, I hope it's a girl," he said.

Severus looked up at him.

"Not because I'd not want a son, but for whatever reason, I've always thought our first child would be a girl."

"Well, if you do get pregnant, we'll just have to see," Severus agreed, moving back up.

He conjured their vanished clothes, which flopped gracelessly on top of their robes, and laid beside him.

"Either way, we did get ahead of ourselves. There's still so much shit to go through. Why we're a couple of fucked up arses and all. But I got the feeling we've got our whole lives to get through that."

Sirius took his hand and kissed them. "I love you, Severus Prince. Always have. I love you and I'm sorry I've been an arse."

"I'm sorry, too, Siri," Severus said, tucking a strand of hair behind Sirius' ear. "I'm an arsehole myself."

"Good," Sirius said. "We're well matched, then."

Severus laughed.

Chapter End Notes

Horny bastards! Well, I suppose we all know what's gonna happen next...

Chapter 12

Chapter Notes

Some awkwardness ahead. Be aware. It's at least a dub-con medical exam, nothing sexual, but definitely awkward...

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

The first full moon of the year had his stomach in knots.

Sirius was *certain* he cleaned up the shack well enough and *tried* to get it to look like it had when he and Severus first entered. But what if it wasn't enough?

A werewolf's sense of smell could be extremely sensitive before the full moon.

And yet, even as he and James prepared the place for Remus, he wondered if he missed anything. Sure enough, once Remus arrived, the first sentence out of his mouth was:

"Why the fuck does it smell like stale sex?!"

James burst into laughter and Sirius' face was far too warm.

"No, really, guys," Remus said, wrinkling his nose. "It smells like the dorm when someone forgets to clean their sheets after masturbating."

"Maybe someone or something broke in over the summer," James suggested. "Relax Moony, just let me scourgify the place a bit more and it should smell more like disinfectant."

"Broke in?" Remus repeated, paling.

"No one broke in," Sirius admitted. "Except me and Sev." His friends stared at him. "We might have...uh...shagged. I tried to clean it up, but I guess I missed somewhere."

"Tell me not on my bed," Remus said.

"Well..."

"Damn it, Sirius!"

"Was it worth it?" James asked.

"Um..." he smiled weakly. "Yeah," he admitted.

"I hate you," Remus said, bowling up the blanket and tossing it at him. "That is now officially your blanket. Keep it. I'll get a new one next time we go to Hogsmeade. It's not like I actually use it."

Sirius set the blanket down. "I am sorry, Mate."

"Can it, Siri, you tit," he said, disrobing and setting his clothes in their hiding spot and casting a locking charm on the cabinet. At this point, seeing Remus naked didn't faze either of them. It spared him the need to buy new clothes, after all.

Remus sat on the edge of the bed, shivering.

Sirius tossed the blanket at him. “Just take it and stop being a baby. I’ll wash the sheets properly later.”

With a wrinkled nose, Remus wrapped the blanket around him. “I feel dirty.”

“You’ll get over it,” James said, patting his shoulder. “It could be much worse, after all.”

“Don’t remind me,” Remus said with a sigh. “You two best transform. The moon will be up soon.”

James and Sirius obeyed and in a matter of seconds a stag and a deerhound were in their place. Padfoot approached Remus and laid his head on his lap. Remus scratched his head.

“I know you’re sorry, but I’m still mad at you. Lucky for you, I love it when you’re a dog. You’re so much more fun and less annoying this way.”

Padfoot jumped onto the bed and laid down. Prongs was sharpening his antlers against the wall, scratching yet another hole into the house’s foundation.

Remus groaned.

Padfoot lifted his head, concerned.

Prongs turned to him as well, ears perked up toward Remus as the transformation overcame him.

His joints dislocated. Muscles and skin elongated. Ears grew pointed. Mouth and nose shifted. Teeth and nails grew and sharpened. Fur sprouted.

At last, Moony was in his place. He howled.

Instinct overcame Padfoot and he dove under the bed, whimpering.

Moony approached him, sticking his muzzle under the bed.

Padfoot crawled away as far as he could. Moony sniffed, laying on his side. Padfoot growled, ears laid back against his head. Prongs joined them, nose twitching before nudging Moony. Moony yelped, bumping the bed.

Through the night, Padfoot didn’t move an inch.

#

He woke to Moony transforming back into a human. Once certain it was safe, he crawled out. Prongs had already changed back, rubbing Remus’ back. He looked up.

“Hey Padfoot. You okay?”

Remus looked over at him and managed a weak smile. “More than, I think,” he said. “Congrats, Padfoot.”

“What?” James said, frowning.

“Someone’s got a bun in the oven.”

“Sirius is pregnant?!”

“Yup. Moony could smell it. And given the way Padfoot was acting that night, any closer and I think I’d have gotten a new scar or two.”

Padfoot crawled out and changed back into Sirius. “I’m not pregnant.”

“Moony says otherwise.”

“Moony is a werewolf, not a dog or even an actual wolf.”

“So? A dog knows how a dog smells and acts. Especially ones as close as us, Mate. You’re pregnant.” Remus stood, stretching. “Gonna get dressed. Then we’ll go verify it with the nurse.”

“No,” Sirius snapped.

Remus and James turned to him.

“I don’t want my parents knowing just yet. I…”

“Need time to think?”

“Yeah.”

“There’s medicinal books in the library,” James said. “We’ll go through them and see if there’s a spell that can confirm it.”

“The nose knows, mates,” Remus snapped as he buttoned his trousers.

“But it’s not enough to verify it,” James reminded him. “Besides, you’re making Sirius panic.”

“I’m not panicking,” Sirius lied, glaring at them. “It’s just…the likelihood of getting pregnant after *one* shag is slim.”

“Doesn’t mean it can’t happen,” Remus said.

“You’re not helping,” James snapped. “Look, let’s go back to the school. We’ll go to the library and check out a few books about wizard pregnancies and the like.”

Remus shrugged and Sirius nodded.

What choice did he have?

Until he knew for sure, he was stuck.

#

James waved Sirius and Remus over.

“Found a spell we might be able to use. If a wizard, or witch, is pregnant, the tip of the caster’s wand will emit a little light. If not, nothing should happen.” He held his wand out. “Ready Sirius?”

“You’re casting it now?”

“Sooner the better, right. It won’t hurt.”

“I know that. I’m more concerned about the result.”

“Maybe he should sit down,” Remus said.

“Good idea,” James said.

“Don’t I get a say in this?” Sirius asked.

“Why are you hesitating?” Remus retorted. “If you’re not pregnant, nothing should happen.”

“Also, we don’t care if you’ve a bun in the oven,” James said. “You’re our best mate. That’ll never change and you’ll have our support no matter what happens next.”

Sirius exhaled heavily and sat down. “Just cast the bloody spell.”

“All right. Just relax, Siri,” James said. “*Puer Deprehendere.*”

He waved his wand over Sirius. The tip of his wand glowed white, nothing as bright as *Lumos* but still bright. Sirius’ eyes bugged and he covered his stomach.

James ended the spell and closed the book, grinning. “Congrats, mate, you’re going to be a dad.”

Sirius couldn’t respond, voice stuck in his tightening throat.

“You should go find Severus,” Remus suggested. “He should know about this. He’s a dad now, too.”

“True.”

Sirius jumped out his seat and ran from them.

He didn’t know where he was going, but he didn’t care. He just needed to run. Needed to be alone to scream and panic and cry and laugh and...

And whatever else someone who found out they were unexpectedly pregnant was supposed to do.

#

On receiving a small message in the journal from Sirius, Severus grew steadily more worried. How could he not with a message such as *I need to talk to you* etched onto the page.

So as soon as he could, he was on his way to the kitchens. Sirius was outside the painting and he smiled at Severus weakly.

“Hey,” he greeted. “I was thinking we could have some tea or hot chocolate or something.”

“Why? What’s wrong?”

Sirius blinked and bowed his head. Severus was half tempted to take him by the arms and shake him, but decided against it.

“I’m pregnant,” Sirius said at last.

Severus stared at him. “You’re certain?”

“Yes.”

“And it’s...mine.”

“Yes.”

Severus swallowed. "I could use some tea."

Sirius tickled the pear and they entered the kitchen. Once making their requests to the elves, they sat at a table in the corner of the room.

"Do your friends know?"

"Yes," Sirius said. "They actually helped me figure it out. As soon as I had calmed down, I asked you to meet me. Sev, what are we going to do? I'm scared and excited all at the same time and I don't know what to be more."

"I'm still working through that you're pregnant," Severus said. He took Sirius' hand in his. "But I know I love you, Siri and I stand by what I said in the Shack: If our family starts early, then it starts early. We can do this. The time isn't ideal, but nothing ever truly ever is."

An Elf brought them their tea and some biscuits as well. They thanked him and Sirius took one, nibbling, while Severus drank the tea contemplatively.

"Do we want to tell our parents?" Severus asked.

"I don't know. Somehow, I'm terrified by the very idea of telling my parents that I'm pregnant. Even if it is yours, they might not like it. What about your mum?"

"Well, again, she might not be happy at first, but she'll cool down once she realizes she's a grandma. And if your parents do have an issue with it, well...I'm sure my mum won't mind letting you stay at Prince Manor."

From there, they entered an awkward silence.

Severus wasn't sure what to think. He could say he was just as terrified as Sirius, but there was also a little bit of excitement.

But the fear was more rational.

He and Sirius hadn't even graduated yet. Their parents might not like the idea of them not being married yet (again, he was certain his mother would get over it).

There was still so much more to think through and plan.

Severus took one of Sirius' hands in his, squeezing gently. "Do you think we can do this now? If you'd rather not...not have the baby, I understand—"

"Of course I want it!" Sirius said. "Why? Do you not want it?"

"I do, but we're not even adults ourselves yet. We've not graduated. And we've still so much more to do before we're actually ready to be parents. We've time to figure it out. We don't have to make a decision right now and we certainly can't do this alone."

"I don't think we will be. Even if our parents are upset at first, we do have our friends and I'll be of age soon enough, you know...I mean, I would have taken an infertility potion if it meant preventing this till we were ready for a child."

"Same," Severus said. "But it seems we're just jumping the gun anyway."

Sirius furrowed his brow. "Jumping the gun?"

“Going to fast,” Severus clarified. “Since getting those damn journals.”

“Perhaps, but they have helped,” Sirius said. He pulled Severus’ hand to his lips and kissed it. “I love you, Sev. Always have.”

“I love you, too,” Severus said, carressing his cheek. “Have you seen the nurse yet?” Sirius shook his head, eyes wide. “I’ll go with you if you like, but I think if we’re going to do this, we’ll need all the help we can get. Okay?”

Sirius bit his lip. “She’ll tell our parents.”

“Most likely, yeah, but what good would not telling them do for us? I’d rather just get it over with. Besides, as much as I admire your trust in your friends, I’d rather a professional healer confirm it.”

Sirius nodded and finished his tea. “Sooner the better, then,” he decided. “Let’s go before I lose any nerve I have.”

“You? Lose your nerve?” Severus asked, following him out of the kitchen. “I doubt that’s even possible.”

He took Sirius’ hand in his and they went to the hospital wing. Outside the door, Sirius paused, letting go of Severus’ hand.

“I don’t know if I can do this.”

Severus grabbed his shoulders. “You can. And I’m right here with you. But if you don’t want to go in now, we can come back another day.”

Sirius hugged his middle and exhaled. “I can do it today,” he said. “I just need a minute.”

“Okay,” Severus said, leading him to the bench outside the door. Sirius sat down, bent in half. Severus sat beside him and rubbed his back.

“I feel sick,” Sirius admitted.

Severus didn’t respond but continued to rub his back, nails scratching through the fabric of Sirius’ uniform. A couple minutes passed and Sirius stood.

“Okay, let’s go.”

“All right,” Severus said, following him to the door and approached Madam Pomfrey. Severus squeezed Sirius’ hand in a manner he hoped was encouraging.

“Madam Pomfrey,” Sirius began, a slight tremble in his voice. “We, um...we might have a problem. And would really appreciate discretion.” She led them to her office and closed the door behind them.

“Now what is it, boys?”

Severus squeezed Sirius’ hand. Sirius seemed to have lost his voice, but he placed his hand over his stomach and understanding shone in her gaze.

“You think you’re pregnant?” she asked.

Sirius nodded.

She went to her cabinet and handed him a vial. "Calming draught, dear," she clarified.

Sirius mumbled a thanks and took it, downing the contents in three gulps. The tension in his shoulders loosened and his nausea calmed.

"Now, when did you realize you might be carrying?"

#

As soon as the "interview" had completed, Severus was ushered out of the wing despite Sirius' insistence that he be there. Pomfrey wouldn't have it.

"When we're done, he can come in and you two can talk about what you want to do," she said. "In the meantime you'll want a little privacy," she handed him a gown, "Take your clothes off and put this on and lie on your back. I'll be back with gear for a pap smear."

"Pap smear?" Sirius asked.

"You're anatomy is a bit similar to a witch's, as you well know."

Sirius nodded. He knew enough. He hoped.

"How much you know about your own anatomy as you've not started menstruating yet, though..." she huffed. "A pap smear is a test that will let me see if you've any damage to your cervix. Sometimes the first time can cause a little tearing. I'm going to make sure there's no disease or infections. The way that works is I have to collect a sample of your inner lining with a cotton swab. I'll show you the tools first before we continue."

"After that, I'll cast a pregnancy test spell. Though it sounds like Mr. Potter managed to cast it properly, I'd like to be certain. That would be the more sensitive spells that need to be cast, after that, I'll have Mr. Snape come back and we can discuss your options."

"Yes, Ma'am," Sirius mumbled. She embraced him.

"You'll be okay, Mr. Black. Now go ahead and get dressed. I'll be back in a few minutes."

She left, allowing Sirius to undress.

Once his clothes were off and laid down on a chair beside his bed, he sat down, trying not to fidget as he waited. When Madam Pomfrey returned, Sirius almost backed away from her as far as he could, eyes bugging at a metal rod wrapped in plastic.

"Don't worry, dear," Pomfrey said. "Just breathe. It only takes a minute." She held the rod. "This is a speculum. It goes inside the cervix and opens it up a little so I can get a sample with this," she held up a small bristle brush. She set the tools back down. "The more you relax the less it will hurt."

Sirius swallowed and laid down as Pomfrey slipped gloves on.

"Scoot down a bit," Pomfrey said, guiding him till his bum nearly hung off the bed and his feet were fitted into stirrups. "Breathe, Mr. Black," she instructed. "Relax."

He knew he could trust her, but at the same time, it was just humiliating. Sirius focused on breathing, gripping the edges of the bed as he forced his lower body to relax.

"This is going to feel a little cool," She said, touching the metal to his inner thigh. "All right?"

“Yes,” he said.

Sirius winced a little as the speculum pushed into his cervix. He winced again at a clicking sound, forcing himself to breathe as the brush eased inside. As soon as the brush was out, so was the speculum and he was scooting back up, hugging his knees.

“Worst of it is over,” Pomfrey assured him.

“It is?”

“Yes. If you’ll lie back down, we’ll finish up.”

Sirius huffed and laid down, glad he didn’t need to hang his butt off the bed again.

Pomfrey pressed her fingers against his abdomen. What she was looking for, he didn’t know, but whatever it was, she was satisfied with her findings and tapped the tube with her wand.

“We’ll have the results in a bit. Now,” she waved her wand over him.

The same white light as what he’d seen earlier that morning with James appeared. There was a soft glow to it, though. A colored glow. Cool colors.

“Is that...for the sex?”

“It takes about two months before a sex is properly determined,” she corrected. “But the spell can predict the gender of the child. The gender is *not* the same as the sex. Now, before the muggle dark lord, Hitler, came about, male children were associated with warm colors, red, pink, yellow, orange. And females were given cool colors: purple, blue, green, and so on. The spell I cast predates his reign of terror.”

“So...Severus and I have a daughter?”

Pomfrey nodded. “A very healthy baby girl,” she said, smiling gently. She turned to the tube. “And a healthy cervix. If you and Mr. Prince decide to go again, do be a little more careful. You can get dressed now and I’ll retrieve Mr. Prince. Then we’ll have a discussion.”

“Yes, Ma’am,” Sirius said. She left him in peace and he dressed quickly. Once decent, he joined Pomfrey and Severus in her office.

“You’ve three options before you,” she said. “The first and most obvious being to have the child and raise her.” Severus turned to Sirius.

“Her?”

“Yeah.”

“The next option is to find a family who is willing to raise her as their own. And the last option is to abort. Most witches at school, in your situation, chose to abort. It will not hurt the child,” she assured them. “A potion can easily stop the development process and allow the fetus to flush out at your next period as early as we are. You will start your period sooner from it, Mr. Black. Now, whatever you decide, you will face backlash. Probably from everyone you know. But whatever you decide, I am here for both of you. Most witches and wizards in the school decide to have an abortion. Others have opted to find families willing to raise their children for them. And in these situations, their parents either cannot or will not help them. Those who do keep their children have the support of their families.”

Severus and Sirius exchanged a glance. Severus turned to her.

“You’ll write them, won’t you.”

“I have to, but not for three days. My letter to your parents summarizes Mr. Black’s exam and how far along he and the child are as of this date. I do not tell them your decision. I do not tell them the gender. Not without your express permission. I usually give the students three days so that you can tell your parents on your own. Which I highly recommend.”

“But won’t they send howlers?”

“I have yet to see a family be that cruel in such a heated and sensitive situation,” she said gravely. “Do either of you think that would happen?”

Sirius swallowed, shutting his eyes. “I do,” he said. “Severus and I are betrothed, but I don’t know if my family would care about that. I never know exactly what to do around them half the time and the other half I just feel like giving up...”

“I think once the shock subsides, my mother will be pretty excited,” Severus said. “I have the same fear regarding Sirius’ parents. They’re not...they’re not good.”

Sirius covered his stomach. “We already agreed not to abort,” he said. “But as to whether to find a family willing to adopt or try and raise her ourselves, we just don’t know yet. I’d like to try...”

“At the same time, we need to be rational about it,” Severus said. Sirius nodded.

Pomfrey leaned forward on her desk. “Are you able to stay rational right now?” she asked. “Or is every fiber of your being demanding you to feel? This moment, right now, is not the time to focus on the pros and the cons. It’s okay to feel fear, and it’s okay to feel joy. You are both strong young men, but even full grown wizards weep due to the mix of emotions flooding them. This is nothing I’ve not seen before.”

They exchanged a glance again.

“I think we’re still in shock,” Severus said.

Pomfrey hummed. “Well, I will send word to your teachers that the two of you are going to take a couple days off and rest.”

She stood and approached one of the cabinets.

“When you are not resting, I think it would be best to read these,” she handed them each books on expecting children, adoption, and child rearing. “This will help you make an informed decision, I hope. And I will provide you with quills, ink, and parchment so you can write your parents.”

She led them to the back of the wing.

“What about our school work?” Severus asked.

“I’m sure your classmates can assist you if need be,” she said. She pulled the curtain around them.

Once alone, Severus turned to Sirius.

“Why did she need to kick me out for the exam?”

Sirius flushed. “Let’s just say it was awkward and I hope I never need to go through it again,

though I have a feeling I will need to. You're so lucky you don't have a vagina."

Severus snorted. "I think the shock's wearing off. That's the most you thing you've said all day so far."

Chapter End Notes

I tried to make the pap smear as routine and painless as possible for everyone, reader and character. I did have some fears that it wasn't as consensual as I could make it, since Sirius doesn't really know what he's getting himself into, but I tried. Which is why I labeled it dub-con.

<https://www.womentowomen.com/womens-health-testing/routine-pap-pelvic-exam-what-to-expect/>

Chapter 13

Chapter Notes

Snack Fluff and Jily angst. Bon Appetit!

Severus,

As I write this, I am giddy with joy.

Though I do wish you and Sirius had been a little more sensible concerning the sexual nature of your relationship, I assure you that if Walburga and Orion do act unfavorably Sirius will be welcome to stay with us.

I do worry about what you two will do about next year. You still need to study for your NEWTs and at the same time it would not be favorable for the baby to be separated from her parents.

Thankfully we have time to figure out how we'll manage that.

Happy blessings, sweetheart.

Mum

“Okay,” Sirius said. “You were right about her being more excited than upset.”

He handed Severus the letter.

“Now if only my parents would stop keeping us in suspense and get it all over with. At the same time, she can’t be worse than Lily.”

Severus hummed. “No, I disagree,” he stated. “Lee has all but literally decided to be your sorcery guard.”

Sirius groaned. As if he needed a sorcery guard. And a sorcery guard was outdated! No one used them anymore.

“I tried to convince her it was unnecessary, but damn that witch is stubborn.”

Sirius snorted, “She is rather stubborn,” he admitted. “But I suppose if not for her, we wouldn’t be here.” *I owe her a lot*, he reminded himself.

Severus scooted over, placing his hand over Sirius’ stomach. Sirius watched him, trying to read his emotions.

“I think we should choose a unisex name,” Severus said. “We don’t know for sure we’re having a daughter yet, after all, but I don’t want to just say the baby or anything like that.”

“Casey,” Sirius said. “But full name Cassandra if it is a girl. Cassius for a boy?”

Severus arched brow at him. “You’ve thought about it long before hand, haven’t you?”

“Maybe a little,” Sirius admitted, grinning. “They’re both good names for either sex and Casey for short. Cassius Matthew Prince. Cassandra Nicole Prince.”

“Casey Matthew? Casey Nicole?” Severus clicked his tongue. “Okay, I got to say they work. Your parents might not like the shortening of wizard names, but I like it. Especially being more original with middle names.” Sirius nodded.

“Cassius Severus, Cassius Sirius...yeah, they didn’t work for me.”

“Same. I like Mathew as a middle name if Casey does end up being a boy and not a girl.”

“And there’s no force on earth or in hell that will have me naming any daughter Cassandra Walburga.” Sirius stuck his tongue out at that and Severus snorted. “Cassandra Eileen might be okay, but still not very original.”

“Yeah, I love my mum, but I prefer Cassandra Nicole, too.”

He pecked Sirius’ cheek and knelt to kiss his stomach. Sirius ran his hand through Severus’ hair. He smirked.

“You still use too much hair oil.”

“Damn,” Severus said. “Well, it’s not as bad as before...”

“That’s true, and thank Merlin,” Sirius chuckled. Severus kissed his abdomen again.

“Casey, Papa’s a wanker sometimes.”

“Wait. I’m ‘Papa’?” Sirius asked, snickering.

“Yes,” Severus said. “I’m Daddy, obviously.”

“Oh, of course, why would I think I’d be Daddy?” Sirius asked, snorting.

Severus stood again, cupping Sirius’ face in his hands. He pressed their foreheads together.

“We can do this.”

“Of course we can,” Sirius said. “I’ll be of age in a couple weeks. You’ll be of age in January. I love you so much and always have.” He pressed his hand to his abdomen. “And I know I’m going to love our baby. We at least have your mum’s support. But as we’re not married and still in school, I still don’t think my parents will accept Casey as a legitimate heir to the Prince Line.”

“Well, that’s not their decision, but mine, isn’t it?” Severus asked. “And as far as I can tell, no child should be considered illegitimate just because their parents weren’t married. Also, this was part of the deal. Maybe not in this order, but they wanted me to be with one of their sons. I am with you. They wanted us to have a child. And now we are. As far as I’m concerned, we’ve done exactly what they wanted from us, even if it is a little sooner than planned.”

Sirius tilted his head upward to press their lips together. Severus answered the kiss, moving to run his hands in Sirius’ hair. “I love you, Severus.”

“I love you, too, Siri,” Severus replied.

“All right, you two,” Pomfrey snapped. “Off to class. Sirius, I want to see you weekly for monitoring.”

“Evans!” James called, racing to catch up to her.

Lily continued walking on, ignoring him. At last, he slowed to her pace.

“Lunch is about to start. I was thinking we could eat outside while the weather still holds.”

Lily turned to him.

“Lunch?” She repeated. “Usually you’re demanding for a date.”

“Usually, yes, but as that has yet to work, I was thinking that we could just have lunch for now.”

Lily stopped and turned to him. “I have said it before: I don’t like you. I don’t trust you, so lunch or a date...it doesn’t matter. I’m not interested.”

“Pity,” he sighed, walking beside her. “Well, tell me what I need to do, then. Like you did with Sirius to help him and Severus get back together. Worked like a charm.”

“I gave them two way journals. Sometimes it’s easier to talk about feelings and difficult situations when you’re not looking at each other.”

“So that’s what he’s been writing in,” James said. “Hm. You’re good.”

“I know. I helped them. You on the other hand, are a lost cause.”

James covered his heart and fake stumbled after her.

“Ouch, Evans,” he said. “I happen to think I’m not that lost of a cause. Think about it: have I bullied anyone lately? Short answer: no. I have not. Lily,” he stepped in front of her, hands held out.

Lily paused, frowning.

“I love you. I have since we met. I know I’m not your ideal guy, but,” he exhaled. “Please, give me a chance to show you what I’m really like.”

Lily rolled her eyes and walked around him. James continued to follow her.

“Please, Lily,” he said, joining her outside. “Lily, I love you.”

Lily stopped again and turned to him. “Why? I don’t love you. I find you annoying and obnoxious.”

James inhaled. “Then tell me what I need to do,” he said. “Lily I’m just a little ways away from getting on my knees here.”

She shook her head. “There are hundreds of other girls who like you. So why me? Why did you fixate on me? You don’t love me, Potter. You frighten me. You may as well wear a cape and a mask and attempt to kidnap me from the opera as far as I’m concerned.”

She turned on her heel and walked away. She couldn’t look back, afraid of what she’d see.

It wasn’t as though she lied about him frightening her because he did. The way he was, the way he acted towards her...she couldn’t not be afraid of him.

It was different for Severus and Sirius. They knew each other before. They were close before.

But for Lily, letting James get close was the same as letting a dragon get too close, never entirely sure if it would turn on you, burn you to a crisp.

James Potter was Lily's dragon.

His continuous insistence that he was in love with her made her think he wanted to keep her locked away in a tower as a treasure of his own. Lily, however, wouldn't give in if she could help it.

She was no princess and she sure as hell wasn't going to let her dragon capture her and keep her in a tower for only his liking.

At least not without a fight. Lily would sooner slay a dragon than be its hostage, thank you very much.

She jogged over to Severus and Sirius, embracing them.

"You two are insane," she said, grinning brightly.

"So long as you don't talk to my stomach, I'm good," Sirius replied.

"I'll leave the baby for when she's here. She? Right?"

"Not a hundred percent yet," Severus said. "But hoping."

"Might be easier to address the baby as Casey till we're sure."

Lily squealed, covering her mouth. "You already have a name?" she cooed.

"Oh, shut up, Lee," Severus snapped. Lily punched his arm. "Ow. You're such a bitch," he whined, rubbing his offended bicep.

"You love me anyway," she said. "Besides, I'm not punching the pregnant one."

"Let's say that a little louder, why don't we?" Sirius asked, glowering. "I don't think the whole school heard you."

"You know, they'll just find out eventually," she pointed out.

"Yeah, but I don't want the whole school knowing just yet," Sirius said.

"Fair enough. Hey, Potter's your best friend."

"Yes."

She walked with them toward the lake. "Then explain to me the best way I can get it into his thick skull that I'm never going to date him."

"I'm afraid I'm as stumped as you are, Evans. Remus and I have been trying to get him to see that for ages. He's like a dog with a bone when it comes to you."

"You know it was kind of adorable at first but now it's just obsession and it scares me sometimes. No one holds onto a crush like that."

"Unless you're Potter," Severus said. "Then you don't give in till you get what you want."

Lily shook her head. "There has to be a way to get him to fall *out* of love with me."

"Unfortunately not," Sirius said. "There is *one* way you can get him off your back."

"Really, and what's that?"

"Just go on one date. Then show him you're not the girl he thinks you are. Disgust him if that helps. Wait, are you and Reggie still..."

"Just friends," she said. "And of course, whenever I have time, I tutor him. Besides, Regulus is a lot better than James any day of the week."

Severus patted Sirius' shoulder.

"What was that for?" she asked.

"He's torn. On one hand, his best friend likes you, and the other it's his brother."

Lily hummed. "I see."

"Personally I think you should go out with Regulus, if only to piss off their parents."

"I have to live with them," Sirius stated.

"Not necessarily," Severus said, wrapping an arm around Sirius' shoulder. "I'm sure Mum would gladly harbor Lily and Regulus, too, if need be."

"Good to know," Lily said, "but I'm still not going on a date with Potter." Severus and Sirius glanced at each other then back at Lily.

"What if Regulus asks you?" Severus asked.

Lily hummed. "Well, I can stand him more than I ever could Potter. I'll likely agree to go out with Reg. It's a damn better option than my stalker, you know?"

Sirius sighed. "James is gonna hate that."

"He'll get over it."

"He hasn't after five years. What makes you certain he will?"

"What choice will he have?"

"Fair point," Sirius said. Lily waved goodbye, going over to join the other girls.

#

"Severus, I know we decide to stay out of it, but this isn't working."

"No."

"But we kind of owe her, don't we?"

"We do, but not in that way. I was thinking appointing her Casey's godmother would be more than enough thank you. Let's not sink to her level and trick her to go out with Potter or Regulus."

"But..."

“No.”

“Sev.”

“No.”

“Please?”

“Nope.”

“Just this once?”

“*No.*”

Sirius pouted. Then his pout became a smirk. Severus glanced at him.

“What are you thinking?”

“Oh, nothing,” Sirius said, kissing him. “I’ll see you later, Sev.”

#

Getting Lily to accept James was going to be quite the task. Perhaps more than making the map, if Sirius had a say.

“I’ve tried,” James said. “I don’t know what I’m doing wrong.”

“Maybe you creep her out,” Remus suggested.

James glanced at Sirius. “No, that can’t be it.”

Sirius rubbed the back of his neck. “Actually…”

“She told you I’m creepy?”

“Sorry.”

“Damn it,” James sighed and sat up. “Okay, how do I make myself less creepy? I’ve given her space. I’ve stopped asking her out every day. I’m not messing around as much as I used to.” He ran his hand through his hair. “Ugh. Why is this so hard?”

Sirius crossed his legs. “Maybe trying to wear her down isn’t working,” he said. “Maybe it’s time to… I don’t know… find someone else to pursue?”

James sobered, staring at him.

“It’s just a suggestion,” Sirius said, holding his hands up defensively. “You know she’s not interested in you and you are a bit obsessed, James.”

“A bit?” Remus repeated, arching a brow. “We went beyond *a bit* in third year on the Evans front.”

“I can make her happy,” James said. “If she would just let me, I could make her happy.”

“I don’t think that’s likely to happen,” Remus said. “Lily isn’t the kind of girl to fall for you, she proved as much many times over. Maybe give her more space or show her the James Potter we know. She doesn’t know you well enough to trust you, James.”

James looked at Sirius. "Do you agree?"

"Don't ask me," he said, scooting back a bit. "I'm not getting in the middle of this anymore. Not when her other suitor's my little brother. Might set me and Casey back." He patted his belly.

"Well, you've been hanging out with her a lot more lately," James said. "There must be something you can do to help me."

"Fine, she's weirder than you think. And by weird, I do not mean our weird. I mean, like..." he huffed. "She's a bit of a meddler and a bit of a mother-hen, so her kind of humor tends to lean that way. She loves fairy tales—the muggle sort...and she hates bullies, so," he motioned at James and nodded. "Just stopping isn't going to be enough. You might need to prostrate yourself before the whole school to even *begin* getting on her good side."

James stared at him. "Seriously?"

"If you love her as much as I love Severus, you'd be willing to do it, but see if she's okay with it first."

"But she might not believe James is willing to," Remus stated.

"That is when he does it anyway if only for shock value. If it helps, we'll do it with him. We're just as guilty," Sirius added.

"I agree, we are," Remus said.

"And if that doesn't work?"

"As I said, that would be what to do *begin* getting her to like you back," Sirius said. "She asked me about it and she seemed scared when she did."

"Great, I'm scary on top of creepy," James snarled, grabbing his pillow and hugging it. He glowered at the wall. He sighed, shutting his eyes. "I don't think I can let her go if it ends there's nothing I can do to make her love me."

"Just don't get so desperate that you decide to slip her a love potion. That would just make things worse, mate," Remus said. Sirius nodded his agreement.

James glared at Remus. "Then why does it sound like my only option?"

"Oh, James, if you do that we will not visit you in Azkaban," Remus said.

"Yep," Sirius said. "In fact, it's worrying that you're even considering it."

"There must be something I can do that's still legal, then," James said. "I love her, guys. I can't..." he sighed deeply. "I don't know what I'd do if she gave another person a chance even though she *knows* I love her. I'd do anything for her."

Sirius and Remus exchanged a glance. "We'll go get something from the kitchens, give you some time to think, eh?" Remus said. "Can we borrow the cloak?"

"Go ahead," James mumbled. Sirius grabbed it from his trunk and squeezed his shoulder before he and Remus let, leaving James to wallow in his self pity for a couple hours.

"There really isn't much we can do, is there?" Remus asked.

“I don’t know,” Sirius said. “I just know that he likes her and now my brother does, so I really cannot actually get involved more than I already have. I wish there was something we could do to ease their minds, but there’s very little we really can do at this point.”

“Especially if he decides to drug her.”

“Agreed. And if he does, we terminate any friendship with him?”

“Fair enough. Being...what I am is hard enough.”

“And I’ve a baby on the way. I love James, but I’ve got to put Casey’s wellbeing first.” They entered the common room and strode out of the hall before donning the cloak.

“Speaking of Casey, have you heard from your parents yet?” Remus asked.

“Nope. Man, is it just me or are we getting too big for the cloak?”

“I think we’re getting too big for it, but as long as we can hide our feet, I think we’re fine. Now, back to your parents and the news that they’re going to be grandparents.”

“Really, can’t you let a bloke change topics in peace?”

“Don’t you want to know what they think?”

“Well...Yes and no,” Sirius admitted. “I do because at least I know where they’ll stand, but no because I don’t really want my parents to be in Casey’s life. I don’t want her to go through the abuse Regulus and I put up with right now.”

“Still certain Casey’s a girl?”

“I wouldn’t go that far,” Sirius said, “Just a feeling. We’ll probably get tested for the gender again when I’m further along.”

After that, they fell silent, venturing further into the castle as they wanted, sneaking past Peeves and Filch both before finally making it to the kitchens.

Remus tickled the pear and once the door knob appeared, they stepped in, removing the cloak long enough to gather some sweets and drinks to cheer James up. Once loaded with enough food to ease their lovesick friend, Remus and Sirius returned to Gryffindor in silence.

#

Sirius ran his foot up Severus’ leg, lazily listening to Flitwick as he reviewed some high level charm or what not. Severus pushed back on Sirius’ foot, joining the game as he took notes, a slight smirk dressing his face.

“Professor Flitwick.”

The students looked over at McGonagall. Slughorn stood beside her.

“Might we borrow Prince and Black?” Officially dismissed, they joined their heads of house in the hall. “Black, you’re parents are here, as well as your mother, Prince. If you’ll follow us, they’re waiting in the Headmaster’s office.”

Severus took Sirius’ hand and gave it a gentle squeeze. Sirius felt queasy as they approached Dumbledore’s office. Ahead of them, Slughorn and McGonagall spoke quietly. Sirius covered his

abdomen with his spare hand and bit his lip.

"I'm right here," Severus whispered. "Whatever happens, I'm right here."

While the walk itself felt like eternity, arriving at the office seemed far too soon for Sirius' liking. McGonagall led them up the stairs with Slughorn behind.

She opened the doors and let them enter first. Their parents were silent and so was the Headmaster, but a twinkle shone in his eyes behind his half-moon glasses.

"Sirius, Severus, take a seat," he said, motioning to the chairs before him. They obeyed. "First of all, I would like to congratulate you both for your coming bundle of joy."

Sirius wished the chair would swallow him whole, slouching in his seat. He couldn't meet his parents gaze and he didn't particularly want to, either.

"As it is, it does complicate matters regarding your education."

"We think it'd be best to abort," Orion growled. Sirius' vision grew red. "This child is illegitimate. A bastard won't have any right to either family lineage."

"Say that to my face, you rat!" Sirius shouted, jumping out of his seat, wand aimed at Orion. "I'm not having an abortion! *We* are not having an abortion!"

"You *can* have more children," Walburga said, trying and failing to seem placating. "But let's be reasonable, Sirius. You're too young. You both are. An abortion is simply the most logical solution."

"But she's not your child," Severus stated coldly. "She is ours. We want to keep her. Or him. We aren't entirely sure, yet. And regardless what you think, she, or he, *will* be an heir to the Prince line, even if the Blacks reject her. Besides, we've only one year left at school. We'll find a way to manage."

Walburga turned to Eileen, motioning her to state her case. Perhaps she expected Eileen to join forces with her and Orion.

"I am the standing matriarch of the Prince Line," Eileen said. "I thank you both for all the help you've given me and my son. But I will not let you hurt both of our children by forcing them to abort their own child." She smiled at them and approached Sirius, stepping between him and Orion. "I name this baby," Eileen placed her hand on Sirius' stomach, "A legitimate and worthy heir to the Prince Family."

"How DARE YOU?!" Walburga shrieked. "WE HAD A CONTRACT, EILEEN!!!"

"And the only criteria is that they are not married," Eileen shot back. "You may not see their child as your kin, but *I do*. And the marriage is something that can quickly be fixed in a matter of months. Sirius will be of age soon enough, and Severus in January. Once they are of age, they may be wed."

"They are still in school," Orion growled. "There is nothing logical about having a child while you're still a student."

"No, there isn't, but they made their choice. In their absence, *I* will raise my grandchild while they finish their studies. Unless you change your mind and would *like* to be a part of the child's life."

“This is not what we agreed on!” Orion snarled.

“How so?” Eileen asked. “Severus was to choose one of your sons by his seventeenth birthday. He clearly decided long before then that he and Sirius would be together. They are to marry by twenty-one. There is still time before then. And finally, they did not need to conceive until they were twenty-five. In my book, they’re ahead of schedule and always have been. All that’s left is an official marriage conducted by a member of the Wizengamot, one of which is on campus all the time.”

She motioned to Dumbledore, who continued to smile.

“It would be my pleasure, Madam Prince,” he said. “And I think we can come up with a way to make it as painless for everyone without needing to separate the parents from the baby. Of course we have some time, I’m sure, before then. And I think a small ceremony would be a good idea, unless our grooms would like a bigger ceremony.”

Severus shook his head, wide eyed.

“I think small would be okay. Family and friends—*accepting* family and friends,” Sirius said, glaring at his parents. “You know, I didn’t know how you’d react, but I never thought you’d tell me to have an abortion without giving me any choice in the matter.”

“Don’t talk to us that way, you horrid ingrate—”

“You always have a choice,” Eileen said, interrupting Walburga. “In fact, if you like, I will have our elves prepare a room for the baby. And we’ll see what we can do about Severus’ room to make it fit you both. Wouldn’t do for a married couple to have separate rooms.” She embraced Sirius. “And once the wedding ceremony and the marriage paperwork has gone through, you don’t have to see your parents ever again if you want,” she whispered.

Sirius hugged her back, nodding. “Thank you,” he whispered back. “Thank you.”

Chapter 14

“You’re mum is awesome!” Lily squealed, kicking her legs furiously. “Is it weird if I say I want to be like her when I’m her age?”

“So long as you don’t end up murdering your husband because he’s an abusive bastard, I think you’ll be fine,” Severus said, turning another page of his book and frowning. “Whoever wrote this book is an idiot and so is Slughorn for using this rubbish.”

He dipped his quill in his inkwell and began making corrections.

“Well, yes, that would not do well, but other than that, your mother is *amazing*.”

“Cant argue with that,” he said. “Where’s Sirius?”

“Getting some books on pregnancy care, last I checked. Homework from Madam Pomfrey. And you might want to read up on it too. Might need to know a few spells for changing dirty nappies and what not.” Severus snorted.

“Point taken, but that’s more child rearing rather than pregnancy. Unless we’ve baby dolls to practice on, I don’t think I’m going to get anywhere near those books any time soon. Besides, Casey’s not due till the end of the year. I’ve plenty of time to learn how to change nappies as well as how to properly burp a baby and whatever else we’ll need to know.”

Lily hummed, flipping through her Transfiguration book.

“I think we all should be as prepared as possible for Casey. There’s a Hogsmeade weekend coming up. I can get a couple baby dolls from the toy store if that helps. Or see if there’s any simulators...”

“I’m sure that’s not necessary,” Severus said. “At least not yet.”

“Why do you two want to keep it secret for now?”

Severus looked at her. “We...you know our history. Some might expect it. Others...won’t understand so readily why I took him back. Slytherins...purebloods...they don’t usually marry for love. And Sirius hurt me. Yeah, most of my peers won’t understand why I would forgive him and want a child with him. They’re going to need to get used to us being together again first.”

“That’s smart,” Lily said. “I don’t know if I could do it if I were Sirius. In his place with my true love and expecting a baby together...I’d be ecstatic. Not to say he *isn’t*, but...you know what I mean?”

“Strangely, frighteningly, I do,” Severus said, smirking. “And I don’t know...have I already thanked you for your meddling?”

Lily grinned back. “You just did, Sev,” she said, squeezing his shoulder. “Can I be godmother?”

“Well...” Severus bit back a laugh.

Mostly so they wouldn’t get kicked out of the library. How difficult would it be to keep it secret that he and Sirius already sort of decided that it was the obvious decision to make?

“If Sirius is okay with it, I suppose I wouldn’t mind having a nutter be my kid’s godmother.”

Lily squealed again and embraced him.

"I'm going to ask him now," she said, rushing off to find him, buried somewhere in the vast library.

#

Defense Against the Dark Arts was getting worse.

It seemed that Brookshire was determined to make things difficult for Severus. He was doing well enough in the class, if nothing else, but Brookshire didn't seem to find Severus' knowledge good enough to get in his good graces.

He nearly stormed out of the classroom after their latest lesson. Sirius took his arm and led him aside.

"I'm sorry," he whispered. "Once the year's up, he's gone."

"I don't know if I can wait that long," Severus growled.

Sirius kissed his cheek.

"I really don't know if I can wait that long, Siri."

"If it helps any, we did leave some...dunbombs in there," Sirius said, grinning. Severus stared at him, eyebrows rising. Then he laughed.

"You didn't!"

"Did," Sirius said, matching his grin. "No one messes with my baby daddy and gets away with it. Come on, we better put a little more distance between us and the defense room."

Severus pulled him into an abandoned classroom. "You're so lucky classes are over for the day."

"Really? Why is that?" Sirius asked as he was pressed against the wall.

Severus pressed his palm against Sirius' crotch.

"Hm. Maybe I should stock up on dunbombs, then, if this is the result. Toss a whole lot of them at Dickshire when he starts bullying you."

"Shut up," Severus growled, nipping Sirius' ear and teasing him through his trousers.

Sirius relaxed against the wall, letting Severus' warm him up as he licked and nibbled at his neck and ear lobe in tandem with the teasing hand.

Sirius rolled his hips, pushing against Severus' palm. His eyelids fluttered shut as warmth flowed through him. Severus groaned against his throat, working the belt open and the fly undone so to slide his hand under the waistband of his pants. Sirius shivered at the touch.

"*Fuck...*" he gasped, holding onto Severus' shoulders as Severus gently tugged on his cock. "*Fuck, Sev...yes...*"

"You like?" Severus whispered in his ear.

Sirius nodded, almost forgetting to breathe.

“Don’t worry, Love,” Severus purred. “I’ll take care of you.” He licked Sirius’ neck, running his thumb over the slit and spreading precome, sliding down Sirius’ length.

“*Shit*,” Sirius hissed. “*Fuck, Sev...m—*”

Severus growled again and moved to his knees, teasing Sirius’ cock with his lips.

Sirius was torn between wanting to watch and trying not to come too fast.

When Severus engulfed the head of his cock and sucked gently, Sirius bit back a choked scream, trying to stuff his fist in his mouth to muffle the noise.

Severus’ tongue slid around the head, pressed against the slit, when Sirius couldn’t hold back anymore and gave himself over to his pleasure, spilling into Severus’ mouth. Severus spat out the spunk, vanishing it with a flick of his wand before tucking Sirius back in, kissing his belly once.

“Somehow, I’ve a feeling you’re more interested in my midsection than usual.”

Severus snorted, standing. “Why wouldn’t I be?” he asked. “That’s our baby growing inside you. It amazes me. Every time I look at you, I’m looking at my son or daughter.” He pressed his hands to Sirius’ stomach. “How can I not be awed by that?”

“You knew I could,” Sirius mumbled.

“Knowing is not the same as seeing,” Severus stated, kissing his cheek. Sirius turned to kiss his lips, moving them around so their positions were reversed.

“May I?” he whispered against Severus’ lips.

“Yes.”

Sirius slid to his knees and undid Severus’ trousers, forgoing foreplay and covered the head with his lips. Severus gripped his hair, leaning against the wall. Sirius glanced up to see Severus’ eyes slide closed as he kneaded the hardened flesh in his mouth with his tongue.

A surge of pride filled him before going back to concentrating on his lover’s pleasure, sliding further down Severus’ cock, slowly taking in more of him till he couldn’t, pushing his own limit as much as he could...

“*Fuck*,” Severus hissed. “*Siri...close...*”

Sirius sucked, listening to Severus’ breathing grow shallower the closer he came to his release.

Even the verbal warning and the shallow breaths were not enough to prepare him for the sudden burst of bitter liquid filling his mouth.

He swallowed a little of it and attempted not to cough, miming Severus and spitting it out. He could still feel some on his chin as he vanished Severus’ spunk.

“Could’ve done with a taste warning,” Sirius said as he fixed Severus back.

“Maybe a little,” Severus said, smirking. “You don’t taste as good as butterbeer yourself.”

Sirius stood. “Have I got any on my chin?”

“Yes, just a bit,” Severus said. He conjured a handkerchief so to clean it off, dampened from a

water charm. "Aside from getting come in our mouths, not bad."

"No, not bad at all," Sirius said, wiping his jaw clean. He vanished the soiled cloth. "So, now what?"

"Well, you've no classes tomorrow," Severus stated. "I've just *one* class, then I'm free."

"I don't know about going back to the shack..."

"Who said anything about the shack?" Severus asked, scoffing. "There has to be a place better than that where I can take my time with you. Certainly can't do that here." Sirius grinned.

"I'll figure something out," he said. I'll send you a note in the journal if I do."

#

Lily couldn't stop the smile spreading on her face when she spied Regulus pacing back and forth, talking to himself. She approached him and cleared her throat. He jumped.

"Sorry," Lily said, laughing. "I didn't mean to scare you."

"Sure you didn't," he said, glaring at her halfheartedly.

"Shall we?" she asked, pointing at the library door.

Regulus nodded and they entered, heading to a table in the back where she could help him with his Transfiguration essay. She could tell he was flushed, blushing faintly as they studied.

The seconds became minutes and Lily was quite aware of how he stared, looking up at her between sentences. It was annoying, but it wasn't as if he was Potter.

Granted, Regulus was a better option than Potter any day of the week.

"Have you any plans for Hogsmeade next weekend?" she asked.

Regulus stared at her, bug-eyed. "No...not presently."

"Would you like to go with me?"

"Yes," he said before the question completely left her mouth. He cleared his throat, blushing. "I would like that, Lily. Um...and I was wondering if you'd also...have you gone to the Samhain ball before?"

"Not really. Never had a reason to go. Potter asked me all the time, but," she shrugged.

"Would you go with me? As a friend, if that's more comfortable for you."

Lily smiled. "I would like that. Of course I'll go with you to the Samhain ball."

"Great," he said, returning the smile. "Uh...maybe we should get back to..."

"If you want," Lily said.

With that, he turned back to the essay, still blushing.

Lily bit down a laugh. *Take that, James Potter.*

#

“Come on, Padfoot,” Remus whined. “Not again.”

Ah, sensitive werewolf noses. “Sorry.”

“Just take a shower,” he groaned. “Ugh. You smell like Prince.”

“Bet I taste like him, too,” Sirius teased, heading into the shower before Remus threw something at him.

Once in a stall, he leaned against it, pressing a hand against his abdomen.

“It’s fun to mess with Uncle Remus, Casey,” he said, turning the shower on. “Lots and lots of fun. Maybe when you’re on your own legs, you’ll have just as much fun as I do with him.”

Once warm enough, Sirius stepped into the flowing water, thinking of possible places he and Severus could meet and be alone for a few hours. The map had named several potential escapes and hiding places that he, Remus, and James have discovered over the years.

But would any of those places be secure enough?

Private enough?

He had a couple favorite abandoned rooms that were in darker corridors of the school, long unused. A couple spells and it’ll be a fair place to hide out alone.

In fact there was a place near the kitchens. They could just hop on down there when hungry, get food and whatever else they need, and head on back to the room.

He grinned as he finished showering, planning to send a copy to Severus as soon as he was finished.

Remus was gone when he was done with his shower, so Sirius sat on his bed and began mapping the route in his journal for Severus’. He made a couple notes about what to look for and that he’d meet him there after his class gets out.

From there, it was homework until dinner, mostly to keep him distracted from the anticipation of what awaited him tomorrow.

#

Severus couldn’t bring himself to concentrate on much. Even homework, which usually remained a decent distraction, couldn’t draw him away from the things he planned to do to Sirius once they were alone again. In the end, he packed his books up and went to the dorm room, sliding the curtains closed around his bed and laid down with the journal.

He grinned and moved to the next page.

Have you heard of phone sex? What am I saying? Of course not. No muggle technology in your house or Mummy and Daddy Black will explode. Preferably literally.

Well, anyway, that’s when two muggles use a communication device similar to flooing to allow each other to talk dirty. Interested in doing so with the journal?

He took a couple minutes to change into something more comfortable while he waited for Sirius to

respond. When he returned to the journal, there was indeed a message:

Merlin's pants, Sev! You peaked my interest at "sex!" Course I'm interested.

Severus snorted and grabbed his quill.

I believe the word you are looking for is spelled "piqued," Siri, but I'll leave that be for now. So, shall I go first? Or would you like to write something to get us started?

You took control the last couple times. I cal dibs.

Severus bit back another snort and watched the words form on the page:

Let's see...

I push you down onto my bed and climb up on top of you.

I lean up on my elbows to kiss you.

I kiss back, running my hands in your hair before I push you back down and rid myself of my outer robe.

I help take it off.

Except, I don't want you to. I grab your wrists and pin them above your head. You're going to let me be in charge this time.

And if I don't?

I don't know. Maybe I'll tie you down. Yeah. I tie your wrists to the headboard with my school tie. Then I finish undressing. It's then, I rid you of your shoes first, then socks. Only then, I take your trousers and pants off. I unbutton the shirt and robes, but I don't dare risk untying you.

I'm struggling against my bonds. I desperately want to touch you.

Well, not happening. You're at my mercy and you know it. I make sure you know it.

Now I know why it's easier to talk on a phone rather than write. So much easier.

Shut it or I'll gag you too with your own tie.

Shit, I'm hard.

Want me to make it better? Because I'm moving down your body. I kiss your lips and move down to your neck. I grind my cock against yours as I tease your nipples, one at a time. I move down your torso and dip my tongue into your navel.

I'm gasping your name and I really want my cock inside you.

Oh, but we're not there yet, Love. I'm not done teasing you. I move between your legs, pushing them apart to fit me as I kiss your cock.

Severus bit his lip, moving his free hand down his stomach.

Salazar, tell me I can touch myself.

Well, in this fantasy, that's a little hard. But in reality, feel free.

*I press kisses as light as I can down your cock and sack. I tease you as much as I can bear before
I take you in my mouth and gently suck.*

Severus gasped, his quill snapping in half as he came. Sirius continued to write in the journal:

*Only once my jaw begins to hurt do I position your cock to slide inside me. I have to take a
moment to adjust to it, but then it feels so good, Sev. The way I rock my hips against yours. I feel
you inside me just...there, connected. I move faster.*

Fuck, Sev, I'm so close.

Then silence. Severus reached for his wand. He cleaned his bed first before fixing the quill.

Merlin and Morgana both, you're so hot.

Thanks. You're not to shabby yourself. Think you'll be ready for tomorrow?

Ass. Of course I will. Hell, I might have to put you over my knee.

Was I really that naughty? You wanna spank me, Sev?

You're due for a good thrashing, I think, love.

We shall see. James just came in. He's mad. I'll see you tomorrow, Sev.

Tomorrow then.

With that, he closed the book and laid back down, grinning like a loon at the ceiling.

#

Sirius tucked the book away, then quickly cleaned himself and his bed before heading over to check on James. James happened to have a habit of closing his curtains when he was particularly upset.

If this is about Lily...

It likely was about Lily.

"Prongs, can I come in?"

"Why not? What else are you going to do?" James snapped. Sirius pulled the curtains back. James was glowering at his feet, glasses on his nightstand. Sirius sat down.

"You want to talk about it?"

"Not really."

Sirius waited. James wanted to talk. He just needed a moment to collect his thoughts.

"Regulus asked Lily out," James said. "She said yes."

Sirius didn't know how to respond to that. He could reassure James there were other girls who would *love* to be his girlfriend. That the likelihood that Regulus and Lily would be together for

long was slim. But he didn't want to hear any of that.

"Why does she hate me so much?"

Sirius opted to think that he was asking rhetorically. He wasn't sure if he could answer that. Particularly so since the only one who really knew that answer was Lily herself.

He swallowed. "I'll go get you something from the kitchens to eat. Unless you *want* to go to dinner?"

James shook his head.

"Okay. I'll be back in a few minutes." He caught Remus by the arm and pulled him away from the dorm. "You heard about Lily and Reg?"

"Yeah."

"So has James. Care for a kitchen raid?"

"Lead the way," Remus said, "Taking it that hard, huh?"

"Worse, if you think it possible."

Remus winced. "Yikes. I might just sleep in the common room, then. Full moon's gonna be a bitch with his pining. Have you seen a depressed Stag before?"

"James isn't enough?"

Remus squeezed his shoulder. "He'll be okay."

Sirius hummed. He wished he could be as sure about that as Remus was. "Just to be safe, we should keep an eye on him. In case he decides he'd rather risk Azkaban than letting her be with someone who makes her happy."

"You'd have been on his side a year ago," Remus said as they exited the House.

"A year ago, he wasn't considering drugging her."

Remus nodded. "Good point."

"I'm worried about him, Remus. It's not healthy, all this obsessing over Lily."

"What about you and Severus?" Remus asked. "Are you going to tell me you were never obsessed with him?" Sirius glanced at him and bowed his head.

"That's different."

"How so?"

"I don't creep him out," Sirius said. "I've annoyed him, angered him, but I've never scared him. Lily is scared of James. And if he weren't my friend, I think I'd understand why she's so scared of him."

Remus hummed. "I am his friend, and I do understand it."

For a while, they fell in silence, deep in their own thoughts.

“We need to save James before he destroys himself,” Sirius said. Remus nodded.

“I agree, but how? Tell McGonagall? Dumbledore?”

“Right now, we try to reason with him ourselves. If he does try to brew a love potion, we’ll have to tell them both and his parents,” Sirius said. “I don’t want him to get expelled, but I owe Lily so much.” He touched his stomach. “The very least I can do is protect her from someone she’s afraid of. You know? Even if that someone is my best friend.”

“I do,” Remus said. “But we’ve tried to reason with him on this before. He won’t let her go. I’d say he was the one drugged, but when he fell in love with her, no one our year would have been able to brew a love potion. Besides, Lily’s not that kind of person, let alone that kind of witch. She would never use a potion to make someone love her.”

Sirius agreed. Lily didn’t need a potion to be loved. She had no reason to make a potion for that, even if they had learned how to make one.

“We let him grieve for now,” Remus said. Sirius nodded. “And then we try to redirect his attention to someone else who might make him happy rather than always break his heart.”

“Here’s to that plan going well,” Sirius mumbled.

#

After breakfast, Sirius went to the room he had designated as *theirs*.

It was an old classroom, long unused, in an old section of the castle that was uninhabited. He set up safeguards so only he and Severus could get into the room.

After that, it was cleaning the room and transfiguring the furniture to be something they could use.

He left one desk alone so they could do homework—Severus would likely want to study at some point, after all. After that, was making a bed and sending the rest of the desks aside.

From there, it was cloaking the area so that they couldn’t be found.

Silencing charms, redirection charms, repelling charms...

All of it that would ensure that he and Severus would be alone for several hours.

At most until after lunch on Sunday.

Following furniture were candles to light the room.

A simple conjure and levitation spell. Only then, once certain there was nothing else to do, did Sirius head out to the kitchens to ask for some food.

The house elves gladly obliged and snuck it to the room where he laid it out on the table.

Two arms snaked around his waist. Sirius turned his head to look at Severus.

“I would say your charms are shoddy, but not bad.”

Sirius twisted around. “Shut up,” he said, kissing him. Severus took his hands in his own, moving to kiss his jaw. “Want you...”

“I’m here, Siri,” he replied. “I’m here now.”

Chapter 15

Chapter Notes

I apologize for the wait. Writer's block. Enjoy the smut and the feels. *bows out*

Two arms snaked around his waist. Sirius turned his head to look at Severus.

"I would say your charms are shoddy, but not bad."

Sirius twisted around. "Shut up," he said, kissing him. Severus took his hands in his own, moving to kiss his jaw. "Want you..."

"I'm here, Siri," he replied. "I'm here now."

Severus backed Sirius up to the bed and pushed him down climbing on top of him. Sirius loosened Severus' tie and ripped the shirt open.

"Oi! Those shirts aren't cheap!"

"Relax," Sirius said, undoing the buckle of Severus' belt. "A couple charms will make it good as new. If not, I will buy you a new shirt."

He rolled them over and kissed Severus, swallowing the gasp that escaped his mouth as he curled his fingers around Severus' cock, freeing it from the confines of clothing.

Sirius then sat up, straddling Severus, and undressed himself. Severus placed his hands on Sirius' thighs as he watched him strip out of his clothes. He pushed his trousers down, awkwardly removing them and eliciting a laugh from Severus.

"What?" Sirius asked.

"You're ridiculously silly," Severus asked.

Sirius grinned and kicked his trousers off before sitting on Severus' abdomen. Severus placed his hands back on his thighs, snaking them up toward the hem of Sirius' pants.

"Take these off," he said, giving the hem a small tug. "I want to see all of you."

Sirius leaned down to kiss him, but before he pressed their lips together, his grin widened. "Take them off me yourself."

Severus arched a brow, then rolled them over. He scooted down, pulling the boxers off Sirius' legs.

"You look...beautiful," Severus said, divesting the rest of his clothes and letting them fall to the floor before climbing back on top of Sirius.

He paused to kiss his stomach just below the navel, then continued his path upward, pressing kisses along the way till at last their lips met. Sirius rested his hands on Severus' shoulders as Severus ran one hand over his side while the other balanced him.

Severus rolled his hips, rubbing their cocks together for a moment. The friction sent a spark down his spine while Sirius gasped and moved his legs apart. Sirius took Severus' hand and moved between his legs behind his testes where the vaginal opening was.

"Touch me."

"I was."

"You know what I mean, you bastard," Sirius snapped, laughing.

Severus kissed him, running his fingers against the folds and coating his fingers in the liquid. Sirius sighed, letting his eyes slide closed. Severus kissed his neck as he slid his fingers in and out. He moved them over Sirius' sack, giving them a gentle squeeze before curling his fingers over his cock.

Sirius' breathing grew ragged as Severus stroked him. After a couple languid strokes, he moved back down to recoat his fingers before getting an idea that Sirius...might like. He kissed him and moved down.

"Roll onto your stomach, Love."

"Hm?"

"Just do it."

"Fine, fine."

Sirius shifted, laying his head on a pillow. He grabbed his wand and cast a couple cleansing charms.

"Ugh, what are you doing?"

"You trust me, don't you?"

"Yes, but..."

"Then relax and trust me," Severus said, gripping Sirius' ass and spreading the cheeks apart. He licked his lips, having a brief moment of doubt. But then he moved in, giving the hole a swift lick. Sirius gasped and moved away. Severus grabbed his thighs.

"Sev, that's—"

"I cast the necessary spells. You're as clean as can be. Let me do this. Just enjoy it, Siri. Or try to. If you don't like this, I won't do it again."

He waited for Sirius to make his decision.

"All right," Sirius said, laying back down and spreading his legs a little wider and arching his back.

Severus moved back in, licking him again. When he didn't move, he eased into licking and kissing Sirius.

Beneath him, Sirius grew more aroused. He could tell from the hardness of his cock and the juices dripping down his skin. Severus groaned, and let off, guiding his cock to Sirius' folds. This time, he mumbled a quick wandless spell before entering his lover.

Sirius twisted around to kiss him. The kiss was sloppy, but the passion no less wavered. Severus

pulled out and twisted Sirius onto his back before reentering him. Sirius wrapped his legs around Severus' waist as Severus fucked him, pivoting his hips faster.

"Come on, Siri," Severus growled, curling his hand around Sirius' cock and stroking. "Come for me."

"So close."

"Same. Gonna come soon. Want you to come first. Please, Siri."

Sirius gripped Severus' shoulders. Every muscle tensed as he came. Severus' hips stuttered as his own orgasm overcame him. His strength gave out and he collapsed on top of Sirius, gasping, tasting and smelling the sweat of his lover.

"You are amazing," Severus purred once he'd gained some strength back.

"Please, my part is easy. I just got to lie back and let you have all the fun," Sirius said.

Severus snorted, rolling off him to lay on his side.

"You know that's not true," he said. "The fact that we are having a baby in a few months should be proof of that." Severus placed his hand on Sirius' belly. Sirius tucked one arm under his head.

"I loved you since I met you, you know," he said.

"It'd be strange *not* to have noticed," Severus said. "You kissed me the first day we met."

"I just...I don't want you to be with me because of Casey or because of some deal our parents made—"

"Hey, I'm not," Severus squeezed his hand. "I love you. I am here because I want to be with you. I didn't fall in love with you that first day, but I was in love with you before we started school. I knew that I wanted to marry you before Hogwarts. Siri, I'm sorry for ever making you think I'd not want you. I was angry and hurt. Enough to delude myself into thinking that I didn't love you anymore. That was never the case. I never stopped loving you. I wouldn't have come back to you if I wasn't. I wouldn't play with your emotions, let alone get you pregnant, if I didn't love you, Sirius."

Sirius shifted to his side, facing Severus. "I never meant to be a bully. I should've been smarter about asking you to spend more time with me. I thought I might lose you, then I thought I did and..."

Severus hushed him, kissing his forehead. "We'll get past it, little by little. Now stop beating yourself up over it. I don't know how good that might be for Casey."

Sirius snorted. "Probably not very," he said. "Fine."

He swung his leg over Severus' hip till he straddled him.

"This time, I want to ride you."

Severus grinned, adjusting slightly for comfort. Sirius leaned down to kiss him, rolling his hips. Severus groaned, grabbing Sirius' waist.

"Fuck, you are hot," Severus growled as Sirius ground down on his cock. Sirius grinned, rolling his hips again. "You'll be the death of me."

“Well, I hope not for some years to come,” Sirius said.

“So you admit you plan to kill me.”

“Well, death by sex can’t be that bad a way to go...”

Severus laughed. “You’re insane and I love it.”

Sirius grinned and turned around.

“Lovely view,” Severus said, running his hands over Sirius’ ass as Sirius swallowed his cock and hummed. Severus moaned. “Gods and Goddesses, that’s good...Sirius...don’t stop...”

Sirius slid down further, feeling Severus harden in his mouth. Severus dug his fingers into the folds of Sirius’ cunt, pushing them apart to lick at, pushing his tongue inside. It almost seemed like a battle for control without really being one. More like who could cave and let the other take over, give what they can to the other.

Then Sirius pulled away from Severus, releasing him and turning back around. Sirius pushed Severus down, pinning him by the shoulders as he slid down on his cock.

“Fuck...” Sirius hissed.

“You’re still a bit tight from last time, Love,” Severus said. “Ungh, you feel so good...”

Sirius leaned down and kissed him before he focused on moving. Beneath him, Severus watched, silent and awestruck. Sirius squeezed around him and Severus groaned, grabbing Sirius’ waist. Sirius kissed him again, allowing Severus to roll them over and pull out with a hiss before moving down to swallow Sirius’ cock.

Sirius gasped, gripping Severus’ hair. “Fuck! Yes, Sev! Just like that...*ungh*...I’m getting close... Sev...Sev!”

He came in Severus’ mouth, nearly yanking a chunk of hair out of his scalp in the process. Severus spat it out and vanished the puddle with a quick snap of his fingers.

“When did you...”

“Started practicing a couple years ago. Figured it’d be useful. Don’t need to use it much,” Severus said. He pressed his lips to Sirius’ neck.

“You can do wandless magic. Severus, that’s ridiculously hot.”

Severus growled throatily at that. Sirius pushed him off, just enough to look in his eyes.

“Go to the Samhain ball with me. I always wanted you to ask me, but you never did, so this time I’m asking. Will you be my date to the Samhain ball?”

Severus pressed his forehead to Sirius’. “I didn’t ask because I was scared to. You know how I am about these things. I don’t handle balls and soirees very well. And in the past...”

“I was a bit flamboyant, showing you off and all. I will not do that the ball, promise. I just want to go with you. At least once, Sev. Please?”

Severus kissed him. “At least twice. We’ve two more years of school.” Sirius grinned.

“Really?”

“Really. I mean, by then, Casey will be out, you know, but I think we can find a sitter, and—”

“We can talk baby sitter and other baby stuff when Casey is out of my body. Until then, kiss me and make me come again,” Sirius pivoted his hips upward. “And again. All weekend long.”

“I can do that,” Severus replied. “But first, I’m hungry.”

Sirius pushed him off and approached the table, pulling Severus by the arm. “Let’s eat.”

“Clothes.”

“Despite what you think, my spell work is *not* that bad. No one is going to see us.”

“I meant the lack of heat,” Severus said, pulling on his pants. “I’ve no fancy freezing my bum on a cold chair, even if you are okay with it.”

He squeezed Sirius’ ass firmly, igniting a yelp. Sirius twisted around and wrapped his arm around Severus’ waist.

“If I get cold, I will remedy it. Right now, I’m burning. I’ll be fine till then. Now,” He handed Severus a plate. “Eat. And after...” Sirius pecked his cheek. “We can do some other things that will traumatize my friends.”

Severus took the plate from him. “Right now, I just want to eat, Love.”

#

Lily met Regulus outside the Broomsticks.

“Sorry I’m late,” he said. “Had to dodge my mates.”

“I get it,” she replied. Regulus opened the door for her. “Thank you.”

Regulus dismissed it, walking side by side with her to a table. “I should thank you for asking me. I’d been trying to gather enough courage to do so for a while.”

“I kind of figured. You’re probably the first guy that liked me that wasn’t scared of what Potter might do if you pursued me.”

He pulled a chair out for her. Lily blinked, mildly shocked, but accepted it with a small thank you.

“James is my brother’s best friend,” he said as he sat across from her. “He isn’t going to do anything to me, even if he wanted to, he wouldn’t. He like another brother. He might feel betrayed but I’m sure he’ll get over it.” He kissed Lily’s hand. She smiled, blushing. “You know, if he loves you as much as he says, he’ll want you to be happy.”

“I hope that’s true,” Lily said.

A waitress delivered menus and water glasses.

Regulus smiled gently. “He isn’t as scary as you might think he is. But if he really scares you that much, I’ll protect you. If that’s all right with you. I know some witches find the idea of a wizard wanting to protect them unfavorable, so...”

“Well, I can protect myself just fine,” she said. “But I won’t say no to help if I need it, so I’ll interpret it that way.”

Regulus cleared his throat, cheeks tinged. “I did not intent to insult your ability to protect yourself, that was not my intent.”

“I figured.”

“So, yeah, offering my help is the better translation, I suppose.”

“Thank you,” she said. “Can we veer *off* the topic of my stalker now?”

“Gladly,” Regulus agreed. “How about...life after Hogwarts?”

“I was going to ask Professor Slughorn if he’d mind taking me on as an apprentice since he’s hoping to retire in a couple years. Maybe take over teaching Potions.”

“You want to be a teacher?”

“Unfortunately, education in our world is lacking a little bit, so there’s that, and I love potions. Besides, we all know Slughorn’s shite at it.”

Regulus snickered at that.

“So I’m hoping that I can do a bit better at teaching the subject.”

“Well,” Regulus said, “I think you’d be an excellent potion’s mistress.”

Lily grinned, picking up the water glass. “Thanks. What about yourself? Any aspirations for what you’re going to do after you graduate?”

“Well, given that Sirius is going to marry into the Prince Family, I’ll be inheriting everything that goes into the Black family name. A place on the Wizengamot and Gringotts board of trustees.”

“And let me guess: they’d also like a *pureblood* witch or wizard to help carry on the family lineage without fucking up the family honor? Isn’t being out in public with me sort of seen as a risk?”

Regulus leaned against the table. “How so? I’m with a smart, beautiful witch. My parents might care about blood status, but I don’t.” He bit his lip. “I don’t know what would be in our future romantically, but I would like to find out, Lily. If you’re okay with that.”

“Your parents tried to convince your brother to abort your niece or nephew because the baby was conceived out of wedlock. I don’t think they’re going to be fond of *us*, if you get my meaning.”

“True, but while they might oppose, my brother’s soon-to-be mother-in-law has grown to be a great force. I’ll just stay with the Princes if my parents really cause a fit.”

“Reg...”

“I want to see where this goes, Lily,” Regulus said, taking her hand in his. “Please?”

Her shoulders dropped and she tilted her head, smiling gently. “Are asking me to be your girlfriend, Black?” He shook his head.

“Not yet.”

#

Why did James insist on torturing himself this way?

Remus didn't think he was ever going to understand it, but they sat behind Lily and Regulus listening to their conversation. Remus passed James notes attempting to keep him calm through all of it. But even then, it wasn't the same without Sirius.

And yet, even if Sirius had decided to spend time with his friends rather than his fiancé/baby daddy it probably wouldn't stop James from shaking with rage.

Remus leaned forward. "This was a bad idea. Let's get out and do something else, all right? We'll go to the Shack. You can let loose there."

"No."

"*Prongs.*"

"I'm fine."

He wasn't fine. He was angry, heartbroken, and obsessed. No wonder Lily was afraid of him. Remus tore into his turkey leg as James picked at his own lunch.

"You know, I liked Muggle Studies a lot," he said. James arched a brow. "Particularly some of their literature. One of the stories we were assigned was titled *The Phantom of the Opera*. French muggle novel. The story is about a bloke in love with a woman who wouldn't love him back and he got so obsessed with her he almost killed her and hundreds of other people."

The glower James fixed him with made Remus regret even opening his big mouth. Maybe *Phantom of the Opera* wasn't the best example for James.

"Thanks mate, but I *think* I can restrain myself."

"Um...okay."

This must have been what Daroga felt, Remus thought taking a few gulps of butterbeer.

#

"Ugh, I don't think I could eat another bite," Sirius said, pushing aside his plate. "When do you think the weird food cravings kick in?"

"Should be soon, I'll bet," Severus said. "Just owl me if you need me to get some weird order to you from the kitchens in the middle of the night."

Sirius returned to the bed and stretched. "Thanks, but I think James and Remus can manage. Invisibility cloak and all."

"There are *spells* that can do that just as well, you know."

"Oh? There are?" Sirius asked. "Well, even so, there's the added risk of being caught at Gryffindor Commons by someone else, love. We're not exactly out yet, even if we will be when it gets harder to hide that I'm expecting."

Severus returned to the bed and straddled Sirius waist.

“I can handle it and all. Right now, though, I think I’ve promised to roger you some more.”

Sirius grinned and pulled Severus into a kiss.

“I want to ride you, Siri.”

Sirius broke the kiss, staring at him.

“What’s wrong?”

“You’re not a pureblood. You don’t have a—”

Severus hushed him. “I take it you don’t know that muggles, muggle-borns, and half-bloods make do with anal sex. True, I don’t have a vagina or a uterus or ovaries like a pureblood wizard but a little prep and patience can let us switch dynamics every so often.”

“I didn’t...”

“Some don’t. It’s okay.”

“How is it that you do?” Sirius asked, sitting up.

“Because I was going to get married to a wizard one way or another,” Severus reminded him. “I figured the more I knew about what that might expect the better. And the more research I did, the more interested I got in the practice of it, not just the theory.”

Severus kissed Sirius’ neck.

“I used to masturbate to the idea of your cock up my ass instead of my fingers or a dildo, Siri. If you need time to think about it, then we don’t have to do it now. Fuck, we don’t have to at all. Not unless you’re comfortable.”

Sirius turned to kiss him. “Licking my ass is part of your...*studies* in the matter, is it?”

Severus grinned. “The term is rimming. And yes.”

Sirius glanced down at their cocks contemplatively. How did *that* get into a butthole? Well, it was Severus’ butt on the line. Not his.

“I want to watch the prep part,” Sirius said.

Severus grinned and kissed him before turning around so his back faced Sirius.

He mumbled a couple spells and doused one of his hands on lubricant before kneeling down and reached between his legs, pressing a finger inside.

The groan Severus emitted after sent shivers down Sirius’ spine.

He swallowed and gripped the base of his cock as Severus eased in another finger, pumping them in and out of his hole. Sirius licked his lips, wondering how something that should seem *filthy* just aroused him instead. Sirius lowered his other hand to his quim, sliding a couple fingers inside.

“Fuck, Sev...”

Severus pulled his fingers out and turned around. He pushed Sirius down and kissed him, pulling his fingers out of his opening, mixing the slicked hands together.

“Almost ready, Babe,” Severus purred. “Just a little more to go.”

He let go of Sirius’ hand to spread more lubricant on his hand and wrapped it around Sirius’ cock. “Let go, Siri.”

“Gonna come.”

“You won’t,” Severus vowed. “Let go. I’ve got you, Love.”

Sirius loosened his grip and let Severus stroke him. He relaxed, head falling back against the pillow.

“Yes, Sev...Fuck...”

“Open your eyes, Siri,” Severus ordered. “You wanted to watch.”

“Feels so good.”

“And it will feel even better soon enough. Open your eyes.”

Sirius did so. Severus kissed him and straightened, standing on his knees and gripping Sirius’ cock. He exhaled slowly and lowered down on him.

Once the head breached, they both gasped and Sirius gripped Severus’ waist as Severus eased further down onto his cock till he was fully seated.

“Merlin, that feels so good,” Sirius said. “What about you? Are you...”

“I’ll be okay,” Severus said.

He took a breath and began to move, slowly rising and falling, on Sirius’ cock. Sirius hissed, digging his fingers into Severus’ skin. Severus rolled his hips and his eyes fluttered closed.

“*Fuck!*”

Sirius pushed himself up to kiss him, moving his hands from Severus’ waist to his hair. Severus groaned, movements growing more erratic. Sirius pushed him down on his back and nipped his lower lip.

“I don’t want you come just yet, Sev,” he said, hooking his arms under Severus’ knees and pivoting his hips. Severus gasped, arching his back. Sirius kissed his neck, picking up his pace. “I want you to come inside me like I’m gonna come inside you.”

“Keep talking and I might come one way or another,” Severus said.

Sirius kissed him again, pushing his tongue down Severus’ throat. Severus pulled his hair and shifted them, gaining balance again.

“Want me in you that bad?”

“Get off me and see for yourself,” Sirius offered breathily.

Severus did so, shivering at the loss of Sirius’ cock before moving down to examine him. Severus moaned as he pushed a finger inside Sirius wet cunt.

Severus eased his fingers in deeper and crooked them.

Sirius groaned. “You are amazing, Babe,” Severus said, kissing his neck as he rubbed his fingers inside Sirius.

“Sev, make me come.”

Severus grinned and stroked Sirius’ cock in time with the fingers deep inside his quim. Sirius whined as Severus stroked him through it.

“Good boy,” Severus said, letting him go and kissing him.

Sirius returned it, pushing Severus onto his back and moved to kiss down his chest and back. Severus closed his eyes and focused on enjoying it, resting a hand on Sirius’ head as he moved down and swallowed his cock, sucking violently. Severus groaned and fisted his hair.

“Jesis Siri...*ungh...yes...ungh...ahh...shit...yes...so close...fuck...*”

He arched his back and yanked Sirius’ hair as he came, seeing sparks behind his eyes. Sirius sat up, licking hips lips.

“You did not...”

“Did.”

Severus stared at him and pulled him into a searing kiss.

This was already the best weekend ever.

Chapter 16

Sirius kissed the Ocamy etched into Severus' skin, tracing the image's outline with his lips.

"I don't want this weekend to end," he said.

"I'm sure one day, we'll be able to shag non-stop," Severus said. "Until then, we've other responsibilities to attend to other than getting each other off."

"We should have done this sooner," Sirius said, biting Severus' ass.

"Ow! Why'd you bite me?"

"Marking. Unless you'd rather I piss on you. I'm sure we can arrange that."

"No. Absolutely not."

"Then you're stuck with getting bitten," Sirius said, grinning. He bit Severus' ass again, gentler than before.

Severus snorted. "You know, most blokes would leave a bite on their lover's neck."

"You ready for that?"

Severus rolled onto his side. "Maybe."

Sirius crawled back up to kiss him. "You're so fucking hot, Severus."

"Matter of perspective."

"Not to me."

Severus kissed him again and moved down to kiss his stomach. "Casey, I am so sorry that you have such a weird bloke for a Papa."

"Don't listen to Daddy, Casey," Sirius said. "You'll probably be just as brilliant and just as weird."

"Hopefully more brilliant than weird," Severus said, "But loved all the same."

He kissed Sirius' stomach again and sat up, summoning his clothes. Sirius groaned, wrapping his arms around his waist.

"There's still time yet."

"Not before dinner. We might as well show up for *one* meal in the hall," Severus said. "Besides, don't you miss your friends?"

"Not really. Don't tell them, that."

"Of course not," Severus said, turning to kiss him. "Wouldn't want to give them you want to spend time with me more than them, even if it is true. Now put your fucking clothes on."

"Or you could leave yours off."

Severus rolled his eyes and pushed him away, standing. "I'm going to dinner at the Hall. You do

what you want, Love.” He pulled his pants up and Sirius sighed.

“Pity we need to cover up, isn’t it?”

“I’m sure not everyone would appreciate us going around naked, Siri, tempting though the thought is seeing you run about starkers in the Great Hall.”

Severus pulled his shirt over his head. He reached for his jacket.

“Besides, you, Mr. Black, are taken, and while that idea is tempting. I don’t want anyone seeing what is mine.”

“Oh?” Sirius asked, arching a brow. “Bit possessive, are we?”

“No less than you are,” Severus said. He kissed him. “I’ll see you downstairs.”

Sirius pulled him into a deeper kiss.

“I love you.”

“Love you, too. Miss you already.”

Severus groaned.

“Too much schmoop?”

“Way too much.”

#

Lily smirked at Sirius who sat across from her.

“Good weekend?”

“The fucking best.”

“Literally?”

“Yes.”

“Figures. This must be the look of someone shagged good and proper. Know anyone looking for a match maker? I’m a genius.”

“Don’t worry, you’ll get your letter of recommendation via owl post.”

“Yay,” she said, grinning. “Oh. Aren’t you going to ask about my date with Reggie?”

“I wasn’t aware you went on a date with my little brother. Dating a fifth year, Evans? Should I worry?”

“Ha-ha,” she snapped. “Regulus is a gentleman. Whoever said chivalry was dead would not think so if they met him. In fact, he asked me to the Samhain Ball. I told him I’d go.”

Sirius hummed. “So...my best friend, who’s been in love with you since our first year, who’s asked you out time and time and time again, can’t get you to go on a bloody picnic by the lake, in view of all the teachers and students, completely safe and the like. But my brother just has to ask you out once and you’re going to the ball with him at the end of the month?”

“Your best friend scares the shit out of me. At first, not so much. Now, it’s like waiting for that note that tells me to go out with him or he’ll kill me at the end of the day.”

Sirius winced. “Well, Remus and I are a bit worried about him these days. But so you know, Remus, Severus, and I won’t let that happen. If it comes to him doing anything dangerous or risks his or your life, we would stop him.”

“Thanks.”

“You feel safe with my brother?”

“Safer than with Potter,” she said.

“Then as the older brother, I have to come up with a shovel talk in case you break his heart.”

“But I’m a girl. If I was a bloke...”

“Doesn’t matter to me. Shovel talk is necessary...now what would scare you enough to keep you from breaking his heart...”

“You think on that, Black,” Lily said, grinning. “You give it a good, long think. Let me know when you have a suitable threat. G’evening Lupin.”

“Miss Daae,” Remus said, sliding into the seat beside Sirius.

Both of them looked at him confused. He sighed.

“Apparently I’m the only one who ever paid attention in Muggle Studies.”

“I’m pretty sure you’re the only one in our group that ever took Muggle Studies,” Sirius said.

“Just explain it,” she said.

“*The Phantom of the Opera.*”

Lily furrowed her brow in thought. Then glared at him once her memory supplied the information. She grabbed a bread roll and chucked it at him.

“You can’t say it’s not accurate,” Remus said.

“No, but I can say you’re an arsehole.”

“I suppose that’s fair.”

~Ocotber 31st – Halloween/Samhain~

“Are you sure you don’t want to go?” Remus asked.

Sirius glanced at James through the mirror as he smoothed out his dress robes. James shook his head, avoiding Remus’ gaze.

“You two go have fun,” he said. “I’ll be all right.”

Remus and Sirius exchanged a glance.

“Just don’t do anything you’ll regret later,” Remus said.

He followed Sirius out.

“I’m not too paranoid, am I?”

“What’choo mean?” Sirius asked.

“I kind of feel that he’s going to do something bad,” Remus said. “I don’t know if he will, but I’m afraid he will end up hurting himself or someone else.”

“Tonight?”

“I don’t know if it’ll be tonight, but I just...”

“Look, let’s worry about it later, okay? We’ll check in on him later, but right now, I don’t want James’ ennui to get in the way of tonight.”

“I suppose that’s fair,” Remus said. He glanced at his watch. “I’ll see you down at the Hall, Siri. Still got to wait for my date.”

“Date? You got a date?”

Remus smirked. “Wouldn’t you like to know?” he said. “Go on and be Sev’s arm candy –” He pause and whistled. “Looking good, Evans.”

Sirius glanced at her, brows arching.

Her hair was loose, flowing down past her shoulders. The fell to the floor in soft black tulle over cream satin. She bore over-the-elbow black gloves and a black feather hair clip on the side, revealing black opal earrings.

“Thanks, Lupin,” she said. “Heading out?”

“Not yet. But Sirius is.”

“I wouldn’t mind walking you down to meet my brother.”

“Thanks,” she said.

Sirius offered his arm to her, which she took.

“Excited?” she asked once out of the tower. Sirius shrugged.

“I think I’m more nervous. Then again, that might just be Casey making me queasy.”

“Ah. Morning sickness.”

“Among other things. Why call it morning sickness when it lasts all day?”

“You’ve got me,” she said, lifting her skirts so not to trip on it with her patent leather pumps – white in color – while going down the stairs. “I’m sure we can make a detour to the hospital wing if you need something for your nausea.”

“Thanks, but I think I’ll be all right,” Sirius said.

From there, they discussed their latest transfiguration homework and agreed to meet up over the weekend to work on it together.

At the bottom of the stairs near the Hall, they met Severus and Regulus.

“My lady, this is where I leave you.”

Lily chuckled. “Thank you, Sirius,” she said, letting go of him to take Regulus’ arm.

Sirius greeted Severus with a gentle kiss.

“Happy Halloween,” he said, pressing their foreheads together.

“You’re not planning any pranks are you?”

Sirius slumped. “No,” he said. “Not today. I don’t think I could survive it with Casey making me ill every few minutes.”

Severus kissed him again. “You’ll live. And I won’t make you dance anything *too* strenuous. I don’t think anyone would want to see you chucking up anything.”

Sirius rolled his eyes. “I don’t think it’d be that bad. Well, yet. I’ve been queasy and mostly chucking up in the morning so far. Most of the time it’s just...medium to severe nausea without needing to puke. Though how I’m managing to get through potions...”

“I think Slughorn’s doing what he can to make it easy on you,” Severus said, “Though I wouldn’t trust his spell work any more than I could throw him.”

“Valid point,” Sirius said.

He glanced around, looking for Remus. His brows rose in surprise then smirked.

“What?” Severus asked.

“Remus scored Charity Burbage.”

“Good for him,” Severus snorted, sparing only a short glance at the blonde with Remus. “But I’d be careful. She’s good at curses. Even better with her right hook.” Sirius blinked, confused. Severus sighed. “She’s really good at throwing punches.”

“Oh,” Sirius said. “Yeah, she is.”

The doors to the Hall creaked open and he linked his arm around Severus’.

“Ready to go in?”

Severus took Sirius’ hand and lifted it to his lips, pressing a gentle kiss to the knuckles.

“I am,” he said. “Mostly because it means we can eat.”

Sirius grinned. “Valid point. We’re starving.”

“*We?*”

“Me and Casey.”

“I thought you were nauseas.”

“I *was* nauseas. Now I think I could eat grown dragon.”

“Which would just make you nauseas again,” Severus said as they entered the Great Hall.

The long tables were gone from the Halloween Feast, replaced with round tables instead.

Soft symphony music played overhead as they made their way to a table in the back of the hall where they could watch the dancing rather than join in, as well as allow a quick get away in case Sirius got nauseas again to the point of needing the loo.

Remus and Burbage joined them with Regulus and Lily close behind.

The girls complimented each other’s gowns while the boys thumbed through the menu, hoping to find something that seemed palatable – something Sirius seemed to be having trouble finding while Severus, Remus, and Regulus already decided.

“Everything all right, Sirius?” Lily asked.

“I want cheese. Not on pasta. Not in a sandwich. Not warmed up. Just a friggin’ block of cheese.”

Severus gave him a gentle hug. “Sorry.”

“Asshole.”

“Why would you just want cheese?” Charity asked, brow furrowed.

The rest of their table glanced at Sirius, who scratched the back of his head, wondering if he was ready for someone he didn’t know as well as the others to know...

Severus gave his hand a gentle squeeze to assure him it would be all right, and he turned to her again.

“I’m pregnant,” he said.

Charity gasped, covering her mouth, and eyes widened. Then she squealed and stood, rushing over to him and embraced him.

“Congratulations! That’s so exciting!”

Sirius tensed, glancing at Lily, hoping he could convey his discomfort to her nonverbally and that it would get her to pry Charity off him.

But as soon as she had embraced him, she released him.

“Do you know who the other father is?”

Sirius grinned at Severus, who jumped out of his seat and behind Sirius’.

“I don’t need a hug. I’m fine. Thanks.”

Charity squealed again and ran around to embrace him anyway.

“Damn it, witch! Get off!”

“This is more entertaining than I thought it’d be,” Regulus snickered.

“Fuck off, Black!”

“There are so many things I could say...”

“Well, I thought if I was to go to the ball with anyone, someone who loved babies would be best,” Remus said, shrugging. “So...”

“As long as she doesn’t say a word to anyone else before *we* are ready to let it be known, that’s fine,” Sirius said.

“Oh, I won’t say a word!” Charity assured him, returning to her seat beside Remus. “I’m just honored you were okay with telling me.”

Sirius looked through the menu again, settling for something relatively bland as the excitement upset his stomach again. At last, settling on a soup and salad, listening to the conversation, chipping in where he could, and over all, trying to enjoy the night, queasy stomach or not.

Remus and Charity were first of their table to go to the dance floor, followed not long after by Lily and Regulus. Sirius leaned against Severus’ shoulder, watching them dance.

“Do you want to join in?”

“No,” Sirius groaned. “Stomach’s flipping.”

“All right,” Severus said, kissing his forehead. “Maybe we should leave.”

“Not yet. I’m not feeling too sick. Just sick enough to keep me from dancing. Not gonna spew.”

“Please don’t.”

“Jerk,” Sirius mumbled halfheartedly, chuckling, and closed his eyes.

Severus kissed his forehead again.

“Feels a little wrong, though, not dancing...”

“Whatever works for you,” Severus said. “I don’t want you pushing yourself to do something you don’t feel up to doing.”

Sirius opened his eyes again and they landed on Regulus and Lily as they danced by. He twirled her and she laughed, coming back to him.

He felt bad for thinking it, but Regulus and Lily did make a cute couple...Sirius stood.

“I don’t think I’m going to feel better any time soon. Let’s dance.”

Severus snorted and let himself to be dragged to the dance floor. “Just take it easy, yeah? I worry for you, but I also don’t fancy getting vomited on.”

“Well, if it helps, I’m more worried about getting vomit on *myself*. Gravity, you know. It’s less likely to spew given how gravity works.”

Severus snorted, wrinkling his nose in disgust. “Why do I put up with you?”

“Not sure, must be a part of my charm. I can be pretty fucking gross and still be one of Hogwarts’ best looking wizards without even trying.”

“I’ll say. We’re dancing, at a ball, which is, perhaps, the *worst* place to talk about vomit. And yet we’re talking about vomit,” Severus said, grinning.

"I don't think we were *ever* going to be a normal couple, Love. We're too weird and awkward."

"No, *I'm* awkward."

"Charmingly awkward," Sirius said as they swayed to the music, resting his head against Severus' shoulder. "It's adorable more than awkward and I just...I'm sorry."

"We're past that," Severus said. "I know you're sorry. You don't have to be anymore."

"I know, but I just..."

Severus stopped swaying and pressed his hands to either side of Sirius' face.

"I love you. I can't promise it'll be easy. And there may be days I find it harder to let go of our past and lose my shit. But that doesn't change how I feel about you. I want to be with you. I want to have a family with you, Siri. So please don't torture yourself. We're together now. Everything will be all right. Yeah?"

Sirius nodded, trying not to cry.

Damn these fucking hormones!

Severus kissed his forehead then his lips, wiping a couple stray tears away from Sirius' cheeks.

"Sorry, hormones and all that."

"S'okay. I get it," Severus said, kissing him again...

"GET OFF HER!!!"

The kiss broke in time to witness James hurling a hex at Regulus. Both Regulus and Lily jumped out of the way and the hex hit an unsuspecting Hufflepuff. He turned on Regulus again, casting another hex which Regulus blocked.

"Come on, Potter," he snapped. "What's gotten into you?"

James didn't answer, only cast another hex, growling.

"Expelliarmus!" Remus shouted.

James' wand flew into his hand.

Without his wand, James charged at Regulus, grabbing the lapels of his dress robes before Regulus could hit him with another spell, trying to cling onto his throat.

Remus raced over to James, attempting to pull him off.

At last the shock of James attacking Regulus wore off and Sirius came to their aid, pulling James off Regulus. James kept struggling, shouting insults and obscenities at Regulus while Regulus coughed, trying to regain air.

"Regulus!" Lily shouted, rushing over to him and kneeling.

"I'm okay," he said, trying to assure her, though his voice was still strained.

"Come on, James," Remus said. "Let's go back to the dorm."

James twisted around and in his struggle against Remus and Sirius, his elbow rammed into Sirius' stomach. Sirius let go and fell, coughing and feeling his dinner start to climb back up his esophagus.

"Siri!" Remus shouted.

A pair of hands helped him up.

"Come on," Severus said, pulling him out of the hall as McGonagall and Flitwick raced over to the rest of the group.

They left the hall and Sirius couldn't hold back anymore. He pushed Severus aside and braced himself against a wall to violently throw up.

The stench was unbearable. The sight even more so. His stomach flipped, again, and he was vomiting again all over the floor. At last, he was done, but his legs were weak and everything tasted horrid and chunky in his mouth. The vomit was vanished and the smell cleansed.

A stretcher appeared, conjured by Severus.

"I can –"

"You're going to lie down and let me carry you on the damn stretcher," Severus ordered.

Sirius didn't feel like arguing, so he climbed onto the stretcher and let himself be carried to the hospital wing. Severus opened the door, shouting for Madam Pomfrey.

As Sirius was put aside in a bed, Severus recounted the fight to her and the events leading to Sirius being brought to her.

"I think I'm okay, though," Sirius said.

"I just want to run a couple tests, just to be sure," she assured him. "Just lie back." He glanced at Severus, who sat down beside him and took his hand.

"I'm not leaving," he promised. "I'm right here, Siri."

Sirius lowered onto his back, biting his lip. *Casey...*

"Is this to check on the baby?" he asked.

"And your own health, as well," Madam Pomfrey said, waving her wand over him. "You'll likely have a bruise from the attack, but otherwise everything is good."

"Really?"

"For now, it looks like your baby's just fine," she assured him, "but you're staying here overnight just in case things take a turn for the worse."

"You don't think that..."

He couldn't finish the thought, only rest his hand on his stomach. Surely getting hit like that wouldn't really do anything. It didn't hit his lower abdomen, after all.

"I'm afraid it's just safer to know for sure," she said solemnly. Pomfrey lowered her wand. "I'll get you something to settle your stomach and help you sleep."

She closed the curtains around them, giving them as much privacy as the hospital wing could allow. At first, they said nothing.

“Sev.”

“Yeah.”

“What if something happens—”

“Don’t. Nothing is going to happen, Siri. Casey will be okay.”

“But Pomfrey—”

“Is always cautious,” he stated. “Just because she says she isn’t sure doesn’t mean that we’ll lose the baby. I refuse to believe we’re going to lose our baby because Potter elbowed you.”

Sirius squeezed his hand and bit his lip. “We’ll be all right.”

But what if you’re only staying with me right now because of the baby? Sirius’ mind supplied, helpful as ever. He shut his eyes, trying to stem back the flow of tears threatening to spill over.

Eventually, he fell asleep with Severus’ fingers trailing through his hair.

Chapter 17

Chapter Notes

new tags

Sirius woke to bright sunlight streaming into the infirmary.

Warm sunlight heated his bed and he opened his eyes to see Severus fast asleep beside him. Sirius nuzzled closer to him, inhaling his scent. Severus hummed.

“Good morning,” he mumbled.

“Good morning,” Sirius replied. “Feeling better.”

“Glad to know, Love,” he said, kissing his forehead. Severus made to get up. “Should let Pomfrey know you’re up...”

“Not yet,” Sirius said, pulling him back. “Kiss me.”

“With your morning breath?” Severus teased.

“Not like you’re breath is minty fresh first thing in the morning, either.”

“Point taken,” he snorted, leaning back down over Sirius to kiss him. “You’re beautiful. Even when you’re hair’s a rat’s nest.”

He punctuated this with ruffling Sirius’ hair, who yelped, laughing brightly. Severus pinned him back down and kissed him once more, pulling away when Sirius tried to deepen it.

“Still need to get the nurse.”

“Fine. I feel better, though,” Sirius said.

“I know,” Severus said, closing the curtains around him to fetch Pomfrey.

After a quick exam, she deemed him and Casey were completely fine and administered a healing charm to the bruise under his ribcage.

“You can leave for lunch and attend your afternoon classes,” she said, “But don’t hesitate to come to me if there are any further concerns for the baby.”

“Yes, Ma’am,” Sirius said, offering her a military salute.

Pomfrey shook her head, smiling gently, and left them alone. Sirius crossed his legs and released a sigh of relief. Severus kissed his forehead.

“I’m sure the rest of the group is worried about you and Casey.”

“Well, I’m the one getting free pass for the morning,” Sirius said, “I’ll be down at lunch for sure, but I’m not going to let the chance to sleep in slip me by.”

“Fine, I’ll let Lily and Lupin know. Though, I’m sure now that Burbage is part of our little circle...”

“If she asks, then go ahead and tell her we’re fine.”

Assuring him he’d do so, Severus closed the curtains once more and Sirius dove back under the sheets, gently rubbing his abdomen.

#

Fifty points and two weeks detention.

That’s all McGonagall gave Potter when he attacked Regulus at the ball.

Lily brushed her hair furiously, breaking her hair band in her fury when she tried to tie it.

Deciding to forgo a hairstyle and leave her hair down, she stormed out of the girl’s dorm to go to breakfast, eat something just so she wasn’t running on fumes, and go to her potions class.

She could handle potions. It was Transfiguration she wasn’t looking forward to, but at least once that was over, she could finish her homework and call it done for the day.

She barely saw anyone as she stormed out of Gryffindor tower, heading down to the Great Hall in quick stomping strides. Her hair swayed side to side as she walked.

She grabbed a slice of toast from the front of Gryffindor Table and spun on her heel, promptly leaving. She nearly bumped into Potter as he entered the hall.

His stunned gaze met her glower and he stepped aside for her to brush past him.

She’d prefer it if he disappeared, but she’d take him not talking...

“Evans!”

Fucking shitty luck is what I’ve got, she thought bitterly as Potter chased after her.

“Evans, I’m so sorry about last night,” he said.

“Fuck off,” she snarled, aiming to go around him. He blocked her path again. “Potter, I do not have the patience to handle your stupidity today.”

“I just...I-I need to know...” he sighed. “Do I have a chance with you at all?”

Lily glared at him and exhaled. “No. You don’t.”

“Why not? I love you.”

“No you don’t. You think you do, but you don’t. Honestly, Potter, you frighten me. I’m not going to be with someone who scares me. That’s just not logical and it’s not who I am.”

She moved around him.

He didn’t block her path this time, allowing Lily to head to the dungeons.

#

James resisted the urge to chase after her again. He thought nothing could make him feel worse

than when he realized what he'd done to Sirius.

Apparently not.

His friends had said he was coming on too strong and that it was pushing her away from him rather than pulling her near. From the love letters, even as he worked them out, to the constant wooing...

James was certain he'd eventually win her over.

But he had gotten far too curious about the ball.

He shouldn't have gone in the first place, but...

She was gorgeous when he saw her decked to the nines in a flowing black and white gown. Her hair shone like garnets and rubies in the golden glow of the hall. He was jealous of Regulus.

How is it that Sirius' brother was able to win her over so effortlessly when he'd been trying so hard?

Regulus leaned down and whispered in Lily's ear. Whatever he said was replied with a nod and smile before he pressed his mouth to hers.

James snapped.

He wanted to hurt Regulus for kissing Lily.

His Lily.

Of course, she never was his to begin with.

He just couldn't accept it. Even now, he couldn't accept it.

You frighten me.

He supported himself against the wall, staring at the floor.

What do I do?

With a sigh, he opted to check on Sirius first, make sure he and the baby are all right. Sirius always made things better for him.

Well, usually.

After hurting him, he couldn't be sure that Sirius would want to see him, but he went to the hospital wing anyway. The door creaked open when he arrived and he stepped in. He found Sirius enjoying some toast and eggs with a glass of pumpkin juice.

He kept his distance at first, unsure if he really ought to approach.

Sirius rolled his eyes, waving him over.

James sat in the chair beside Sirius' bed.

"I'm so sorry, Padfoot."

"Well, no harm done. Baby's okay."

“Thank Merlin,” James said. “But I still hit you, mate. I shouldn’t have done that. I shouldn’t have attacked your brother either.”

“Yeah, that was the point of you not going to the ball, you idiot. So why did you?”

James sighed and briefly explained what drew him down there. The fury he felt when he saw Regulus kiss Lily – to which Sirius hummed, nodding his understanding.

“I tried to apologize to her just a few minutes ago. Before I came here.”

“Oh, Prongs...” Sirius groaned.

“I know you told me that she was scared of me, but I didn’t realize how much. I don’t know what to do, Siri. I love her. I’ve always loved her.”

Sirius pushed the tray aside.

“Prongs, I don’t think you’ve felt love for Lily in a long time. After a while, it stopped being love and became obsession. That scared all of us. Remus and I were very worried for you. And the more I got to know Lily, the more worried for you I got. I know you care for her, but I got to know her a lot from the help she gave me and Sev. I promised to protect her from you if need be.”

James bowed his head, removing his glasses and sniffing.

“It’s hard, Pads. I...I always thought that she...she and I...”

“I know, mate.”

“I don’t know if I can give up so easily.”

“You aren’t giving up easily,” Sirius pointed out. “You fought to win her heart for years, James. We both fought the ones we love and we fought hard. I wish it could have turned out differently for you, mate, but we didn’t know how it would. I didn’t know that my brother would have the guts to go against my parents and ask Lily out. I didn’t know he even *liked* Lily, let alone had a crush on her enough to ask her out. I didn’t know until she told me that she was afraid of you...it could have gone any way. I could have lost Severus entirely while you managed to win Lily over. We both could have lost the love of our life. We both could have won them back, too.”

James pinched the bridge of his nose and Sirius summoned the tissue box.

“I am sorry, mate. I know you’d never intentionally hurt her. But there’s really no point in continuing to pursue her if they’re scared of you.”

James nodded reluctantly.

Sirius, from then on, remained silent as James silently wept. After a few minutes, he inhaled shakily.

“It’s not worth it,” he said. “It’s not worth losing my friends.”

“I am sorry, James.”

“Not your fault,” James sniffed. “Um...I’m gonna take a sick day, I think.”

“Okay, mate.”

He looked past James at Remus.

“I’ll tell Moony if you want to head back to the dorm and rest up. Yeah?”

James nodded.

“Cool. Come here, Prongs.” Sirius pulled him into a hug. “We love you, mate. Never forget that.”

He let James go and he strode out of the infirmary, barely making eye contact with Remus.

“What was that about?”

“He’s going to try and forget Lily,” Sirius said. “He’s going to take the day off, though.”

“Hm...and you?”

“I’m clear after lunch.”

“Cool, that means I have to explain to McGonagall why James isn’t at class. Lucky me.”

“Lucky you. But I’ll take Dickshire,” Sirius shivered at that.

“Brookshire, Siri.”

“Yeah, he hates me and Sev both. He’s a dick.”

Remus shrugged, agreeing with that. “Well, I guess all we can do is hope that James gets better quick, yeah?”

“Yeah.” Sirius felt his stomach flip. “Bowl. Quick.”

Remus handed it to him and jumped back as Sirius regurgitated his breakfast.

#

Sirius yelped when he was pulled into a closet. Severus grinned, kissing him, pinning his hands against the shut door.

“Happy birthday, Love,” he purred, moving to kiss Sirius’ neck.

“Fuck,” he hissed.

Severus released his hands and moved to his clothes, opening them up and running his hands over the softening, swelling chest. Sirius bit his lip as Severus latched attention to the right breast, licking and sucking at his nipple before moving to the other.

He moved downward, kissing a trail down the swell of Sirius’ belly to the bulge tenting his trousers. Severus smirked as he undid the belt and button before unzipping the fly with his teeth.

“Oh, *fuck*...Sev, you’re mad...”

“Quiet. Wouldn’t want Filch catching us,” he said.

Severus pulled trousers and pants down swiftly. He licked the underside of Sirius’ cock and peppered soft kisses along the sides of the shaft before swallowing Sirius, bobbing his head as he sucked.

Sirius clamped one hand over his mouth while the other gripped Severus' hair.

He tried to buck, groaning when Severus pinned him to the wall. The building pleasure made his eyes roll back. Severus hummed, moving one hand from Sirius' hip to behind his testes, pushing against his vagina, but barely entering.

Sirius gasped when he came. Severus swallowed around him, moving off him.

"Fuck...that was..."

"Not finished with you, yet, Black," Severus purred, climbing back to his feet. "You're birthday fucking is just beginning." He squeezed Sirius' bare ass. "Tell me what you want, Baby."

Sirius hummed. "Fuck me from behind." He turned around, pushing his back side against Severus' groin. Severus hissed. "Fuck my cunt hard, Sev."

"You want it hard?" Severus asked, growling, grinding against Sirius' ass.

"Fuck, yes!"

Severus pushed Sirius' hair out of the way and kissed his neck as he undid his trousers. Sirius pushed back against Severus' cock as it slid inside him. At last one, Severus bucked his hips into Sirius, who took to biting his fist to keep from making too much noise.

"Yeah, you like that, Baby?" Severus asked, licking the shell of Remus' ear. "You like my cock balls deep in you, do ya?"

Sirius nodded, not trusting himself to keep quiet.

"Fuck, Siri," Severus hissed. "You're so fucking sexy. Sirius, fuck..." He stilled, gasping. Sirius shivered, feeling his release. "Fuck...oh, *fuck*..."

After a moment, Severus pulled out.

Sirius turned back around and kissed Severus as he teased a second orgasm from his cock. Severus took over, batting his hand away. Sirius gasped, tilting his head back.

Severus kissed his exposed neck before pulling away and licked his hand clean.

"Shit, that's fucking erotic, Sev."

"Oh, I'm sure," he said, grinning. "And more to come."

"I've Astronomy tonight," Sirius pouted, pulling his pants and trousers back up.

"Not till *late* tonight," Severus reminded him, fixing his own clothes as well. "You'll make your class. You'll get there with a big shit eating grin and maybe a bit of a limp, but completely happy, satisfied, and maybe with a little frosting stuck to the skin."

"Why would..." Sirius blushed and shoved Severus playfully. "Kinky bastard."

"Only for you," Severus said.

The door opened and they grinned at Filch, rushing out as he screamed obscenities at them.

Lily hadn't seen Regulus since the ball.

She blamed Potter for it and prayed that Regulus hadn't been chased away from Potter's attack. She hid in the library, studying most of the time, completing and editing essays not due for another couple weeks.

If she didn't do something productive, she thought she'd feel the return to the furious, hurtful rage she felt the previous day. She knew she hadn't been as hard on James as she could have, but he seemed to have *finally* gotten the message that she didn't want him.

For whatever reason, the one time they did run into each other – this morning at the great hall for breakfast – he mumbled a hello and moved around her. She couldn't help but feel she had been too hard, but reminded herself that she hadn't.

He had been nothing but a thorn in her side that took ages to pull out.

Lily pushed the thought that he looked sadder than usual from their brief encounter that morning.

Regulus slipped into the seat beside her. She noted a small cut across his nose from where James had punched him.

"Your nose," she said.

"It doesn't hurt. I'm fine. I'm more worried about you. Are you okay?"

Lily grinned. "I am now," she said.

Regulus pulled her into a kiss.

His lips, like before, were soft and a bit chapped, but entirely gentle. She couldn't help grinning as they kissed, his hand cupping the back of her neck and thumb stroking her jaw.

After a couple leisure seconds, he released her, eyes fixed on her mouth before glancing up at her.

"You're beautiful," he whispered.

"Thank you," Lily replied. He kissed her once more, a quick, gentle peck, before lowering his hand. "Potter didn't freak you out?"

"Well, I didn't expect him to act like that," he admitted, "But no. His actions just reaffirms that you're the kind of woman who's worth fighting for."

Lily's grin, if possible, widened. "I'm honored you think so, but I can defend myself."

"Never said you couldn't," Regulus said, smirking.

He seemed almost uncannily like Sirius then, the scab a bit more pronounced.

"And I never will say that. Even so, I don't mind helping out if need be. Wouldn't be much of a boyfriend if I didn't defend you here and there, whether you can handle yourself or not."

"And the cut? That could easily be taken care of."

"Yeah, but it's my first battle scar," he joked. "Why not let it be seen a bit longer?"

Lily shook her head, snorting.

“Yes, yes, we men are ridiculous,” Regulus said. “And yet, despite that, witches love us wizards anyway.”

“Strangely enough.”

“Very strange,” Regulus agreed. “Tell me: why? Why would you be attracted to us? We’re uncouth, we’re ugly, we do stupid things...”

“You make us laugh,” she said. “It’s that simple.”

“Thank Merlin!” Regulus exclaimed. “Make a girl laugh, chances are we’re set.”

“Well, you know, girls can be rather uncouth. Some of us lack in the looks department, too.”

“No. No such thing as an ugly woman.”

“Then there’s no such thing as an ugly man, either,” Lily said, poking his shoulder.

A throat cleared and they glanced at Madam Pince, grinning sheepishly.

Once assured they’d keep it down, she walked off. They giggled silently.

“May I kiss you again?” Regulus asked.

Lily nodded, letting Regulus pull her back and kiss her.

The kiss built in passion and Lily found herself needing support, bracing herself by putting her hands on Regulus’ shoulders. He licked the seam of her lips, eliciting a slight gasp from her that let his tongue slip inside her mouth.

One of his hands rested on her thigh, sliding upward gradually under her skirt. Lily briefly considered stopping his hand, but decided to see how far he’d go. Somehow, she had a feeling he’d be more conscientious next time if she did, and *fuck* it felt good.

She didn’t want him to stop.

She gasped when his fingers brushed against the seam of her panties, almost like an electric shock that made her body vibrate rather than jump.

He paused at her gasp, fingers stilling.

“Don’t stop,” she whispered against his mouth.

Regulus resumed kissing her, fingers pushing the fabric aside and caressing between the folds of her labia toward her clit with renewed surety.

Lily shuddered when his thumb at last made contact with her sex. She whispered encouragement between their kisses, getting closer to completion as he moved a couple fingers inside her opening.

“Fuck,” he whispered. “Lily, can I...I want to...”

“Yes,” she whispered.

“Wanna shag you so bad...”

Lily thought on that a moment and broke the kiss for a moment, encouraging him to kiss her neck

as he brought her off. She moved one of her hands to his groin, feeling his cock through his trousers.

He cursed against her neck and bucked against her hand.

Her eyes scanned the library, looking for anyone who might try to stop them or bring attention to what they were doing.

Reassured, no one was watching, she undid the fly to Regulus' trousers and slipped her hand under the elastic band of his boxers.

Regulus bucked into her fist, capturing her lips again.

"I want you, Lily...you're gorgeous...love how you feel around my fingers..."

Lily hushed him, rubbing her thumb over the slit of his cock. He moaned, coming over her hand.

Regulus pressed his thumb just a little harder, and at last she gasped again, squeezing around his fingers as she came.

"Fuck," he whispered. "Lily..."

She kissed him again and they readjusted their clothes. Regulus cast a quick cleaning charm on the both of them, so the only indication of anything more than snogging happened were their flushed cheeks.

Lily scrawled a quick note and handed it to him:

9 PM, abandoned classroom on 5th floor. See you then?

Regulus nodded, eyes wide. Lily kissed his cheek, quickly making her exit from the library.

Chapter 18

James tried to hide it, but the melancholy was far too thick to ignore. Sirius wished there was something that could help James forget how he felt for her.

Remus insisted it just needed time and perhaps he was right. Remus usually was.

As for Lily, she seemed changed.

Happier.

Regulus was the same and both could be found studying together in the library or together at Hogsmeade.

Sirius asked him if all was truly well, given how some of the Slytherins seemed to have shunned him.

“It’s not all of them,” Regulus assured him. “Just those who are most like our parents. Radicals and fanatics. Even so,” he shrugged. “I love her. If they don’t like it, then they aren’t worth getting along with.” Sirius embraced him.

“Proud of you,” he mumbled.

“Okay. Thanks. Let go. It’s getting weird.”

Sirius snorted at Regulus’ discomfort but released him anyway. He was starting to feel queasy again anyway.

At the full moon, he sent James and Remus off.

All three agreed that Padfoot wasn’t keen on being near Moony while carrying a baby so it would be best for Sirius to stay behind. He greeted them the next morning in the shack with a light breakfast.

“It was depressing without you,” Remus said. “Prongs wasn’t keen on doing much no matter what Moony did to distract him.”

“Yeah?”

“Maybe we should get him a girl,” Remus said.

“Or a guy,” Sirius added.

James glared at them. “If you weren’t pregnant, Sirius...”

Remus grinned. “I think a guy *could* handle him better than a girl.”

“I hate you both.”

“Why? You might like being with a bloke,” Sirius said.

“Fuck off.” All that did was send Remus and Sirius into raucous laughter.

After the moon waned, the weather dipped downward and the castle grounds were soon covered in

fresh, soft snow.

Students took time in between classes to have snow ball fights and build snowmen.

But Pomfrey insisted that Sirius stay indoors as much as possible and would have him come for check ups twice a week instead as the winter season usually meant sicknesses flying through the halls.

Severus, to Sirius' chagrin, sided with her.

It isn't so bad, Sirius thought as he followed James and Remus into the Defense classroom.

He sat beside Severus, who took his hand under the table and gave it a small squeeze. Sirius squeezed back, reassuring him that he was all right.

For now.

The nausea seemed to come and go as it pleased.

Brookshire marched in, barking orders to prepare for a surprise quiz.

Amidst the rustling of bags being set aside and inkwells unstopped was collective groans. After the quiz, the latest essays were passed back to their original writers.

Sirius could live with an EE etched at the top of his page, but Severus was frowning at his own. He peered over Severus' shoulder.

He'd still gotten a better over all grade than Sirius, but continued to frown.

"It's not a bad grade," Sirius tried assuring him.

"But I usually do better in defense," Severus sighed. "I'll ask where I went wrong."

"Doubt it was anywhere," Sirius said.

"He'd cost himself his job if he affected my own work. I doubt he'd be that petty. I doubt he hates me that much."

Sirius hummed, glancing at Brookshire as he set the projector up to discuss their next creature or spell.

"Professor, what's the penalty for bullying again?"

"Excuse me?"

Severus glared at him, digging his fingers into Sirius' thigh.

"Just wondering if it's more severe for a teacher than for a student," he said.

"*Sirius!*" Severus hissed.

"I mean I imagine so. Worst I've ever gotten was detention. But I imagine that it might be a sack-able offense for teachers. Could even end up sending one to Azkaban—"

"That is enough!" he shouted, slamming his hand on the desk and glaring at Sirius. "I will see you tonight for detention, Black."

“Professor,” Severus said. “He’s overreacting. Hormones...”

Sirius glowered at him. “Really?”

“Shut up,” Severus snapped. He lowered his voice. “Sir, he’s pregnant. I know that all our teachers know that, so if a detention needs to be served—”

Brookshire snarled. “You will not try to get your partner out of this, Prince.”

“Sir—”

“You want to join him?”

Severus shook his head, shrinking down a bit.

“Seven o’clock, Black.”

Brookshire straightened and the lesson continued. Sirius stuffed his things into his bag and fled, furious. Severus caught him by the arm outside in the hall and led him aside.

“What were you doing?”

“Defending you. Or I thought so,” Sirius snapped.

“I can defend myself without risking detention,” Severus snapped. “And I’m not confident that he’ll play nice just because you’re pregnant.”

“If he does, I’ll go to the nurse.”

Severus groaned. “Sirius, if you did this because I was upset about a grade...”

“It did upset you.”

“Yes, but I was going to *ask* why I got a grade worse than usual. Even with as much of an ass as he’d been, he’d still been fair in grading us all.”

“Okay. So maybe that grade was fair, but he has no reason to treat you the way he does.”

“I agree, he doesn’t. And I’d like to know what it is about me that offends him so much. But I’ve been working on finding a time to ask about it and figure out a way to compromise.”

“Well, I’ll have time tonight.”

“And I guess I should be grateful that you got detention, then.”

“Why are you angry that I tried to defend you?”

“Because he might have you do something that puts you and the baby at risk!” Severus shouted.

Sirius stilled.

“I know it’s unlikely, but I can’t...”

Sirius embraced him gently. “I wouldn’t risk her. I’m sorry. I didn’t think and I want to make up for the times I didn’t come to your defense.”

Severus exhaled. “Just be careful, okay?”

"I'll be careful."

#

Sirius knocked on the door at five minutes to seven and waited to be admitted by Brookshire, who directed him then to a couple buckets.

"You'll be cleaning the classroom without magic. I've a spare bucket in case you end up getting sick, but I trust that the products won't bother you too much."

Sirius set his bag down and got to work. When it came to the wood polish wasn't too bad, but he found himself feeling ill just from the scent alone.

He pushed through until the smell overpowered him and he scrambled for the empty bucket, retching.

"I think we'll call it a night," Brookshire said, setting a glass of water beside Sirius. A glance at him told him that he was sickened. "I'll take you to the nurse." He handled the bottle of polish, frowning. "I was told this wouldn't affect you."

"The smell."

"Ah. It is a bit strong, isn't it?"

Sirius retched again, shaking.

Once certain he wasn't going to vomit again, Brookshire lead him out. The lack of strong pine scents helped, but Sirius still felt a bit queasy.

He walked next to Brookshire up to the Hospital Wing. On the way, he crossed his arms over his chest and tried not to hunch over, though an urge to protect his abdomen was a bit stronger than usual.

After a few minutes, as his nausea settled, he looked at Brookshire.

"Sir, what is it about Severus you don't like?" he asked. "You've not been fair to him since the year started and..." he swallowed, staring at him.

Brookshire dared not look at him.

"I investigated his father's murder," he said. "I never liked that she received such a light sentence. And that capability is in him as well, if it's in his mother."

Sirius listened. "If you investigated his father's murder, then you should have known that Severus and his mother were being abused."

"I knew. We all knew. But that doesn't matter."

"He deserved what he got."

"Some think so," Brookshire said. "But justice is impartial. Even if her husband was a horrible man, she took his life."

Sirius sighed. "Men and women like Severus' father are poison, Sir. What Madam Prince did was something that people should do more often."

“Vigilante justice will only lead to chaos, Black.”

“Perhaps chaos, then, is necessary. She’s a good woman and a great mother. She certainly isn’t the first mother to kill for her child.”

“No, perhaps not, but it isn’t necessary in the twentieth century.”

“She thought it was necessary,” Sirius said. “Maybe Justice should be less impartial.”

Brookshire barked a laugh. “You must know Mad-Eye then.”

They paused outside the hospital wing.

“Severus isn’t a killer. And his mother never hurt anyone or anything since. And besides, he hasn’t done anything to warrant your prejudice. At least keep that in mind, Professor.”

Brookshire arched a brow at him and Sirius entered the infirmary.

#

Sirius?

Where are you?

Is your detention over yet?

Sirius shook his head, glowering at Pomfrey’s back.

Blasted witch was a massive worrywart. He felt fine not long after arriving at the infirmary, but she insisted he stay overnight.

He freed a quill and his inkwell to respond, chewing a bland breakfast as he did so.

I’m fine, Love. Got sick and went to the HW.

Pomfrey had me stay in.

And I know what got Dickshire’s pants in a twist. Bloke’s a self-righteous asshole.

He closed the journal and finished eating as Pomfrey finished her rounds before checking the journal for a response.

Good. I’ll be in after Alchemy.

I might be out long before your class ends.

“All right, Mr. Black?”

He closed the journal and gave Madam Pomfrey a winning smile and replied affirmatively.

“Good. Lie back and I’ll do a quick check on Casey.”

Sirius obeyed, letting her tug his shirt up to reveal his stomach. She waved her wand in a twist over him, mumbling a spell under her breath, then pressed the tip of her wand to parchment.

The blank page was quickly covered in an etching of Sirius’ womb. He fixed his shirt and crossed

his legs, eyes wide at the image.

Madam Pomfrey pointed at places that looked like little nubs.

“She’s developing well. Arms and legs should look more human soon. And here,” she noted the head. “She’s starting to develop facial features. And down here, her tail is still there, but don’t worry too much about that. It’ll be gone in another two weeks.”

“Her eyes?”

“Are still developing and the lids will remain fused shut even after they’ve developed,” she assured him. “But so far, she’s a very healthy baby. Now, I know I’m referring to her in the feminine, but we won’t know her actual sex until you’re between sixteen to twenty weeks along.”

Not till after New Years then, he thought. “So...am I good to go now?” he asked.

He smiled again when she glared. Then she sighed.

“Yes, Mr. Black, you may go. But do try to be more careful. No one carrying should be getting into as much trouble as you seem to find yourself getting into, what with your panache for it.”

“It’s not like I intended to be hit in the gut at Halloween,” he muttered.

But as soon as she was gone, he grabbed his things, the portrait, and the journal. He stopped at the library to copy the image inside along with the note:

Baby’s doing fine.

Along with the image were a few notes, pointing out the developing legs and arms. Severus would hate he was at class rather than with Sirius, but that couldn’t be helped.

Hopefully, Severus would be pleased to see it.

Sirius returned to Gryffindor Tower. There, he reassured James and Remus of his whereabouts the previous night and showed them the ultrasound.

“She’s still so small,” James said, staring at the image.

“Around a few centimeters, now,” Sirius said. “But I’ll likely be huge at the end of the year.”

“And wishing you used a spell to prevent this?” Remus asked, smile light and teasing.

“I already do here and there, but then again,” he shrugged. “It would have happened anyway. So what if it’s sooner than expected?”

James hummed, looking at the ultrasound again. “I know we agreed that I’d be your kid’s godfather and you’d be my kid’s, but...after what I did at Halloween...”

“Mate, we both know that was an accident,” Sirius said. “And no harm’s been done, so relax. You’re still her godfather.”

“You sure you’d rather it not be Remus?”

“What am I gonna do with a baby?” Remus asked. “I’d panic. With what I am, I think I’d be too scared to even hold her.”

“Relax, you’re the family pet, Remus.”

James and Sirius laughed at his befuddled expression. Then he chortled, shaking his head at them.

“Woof-woof,” he said.

“God-dog,” James cried, wiping his eyes. “He’s the god-dog.”

They laughed till Sirius felt nausea again. Fighting it down, he cleared his throat and cracked his neck.

“Granted, on *our* nights, I’ll likely leave her with Sev so I can join in again.”

“Nice,” Remus said, “We miss Padfoot.”

“And Padfoot misses Moony and Prongs,” Sirius assured them, embracing them both, one arm around either shoulder. “Even so, thanks for helping where you can with my pup.”

James grinned. “We already gave the baby her own nickname. She’s a second generation Marauder, after all.”

Sirius snorted. “Dare I ask?”

“Toebean,” Remus said. “We discussed this extensively last full moon.”

Sirius cackled, sliding down his seat. “I’m going to have such a hard time explaining that to Severus when you start calling her Toebean instead of Casey.”

“But it *fits*. Padfoot and his puppy Toebean,” James said. “It’s just too cute.”

“All right, I have to tell Severus. Now. It can’t wait.”

Sirius reached for the journal. He had to know *now* what Severus had to say to that. After sending the message, he waited, snickering.

After a minute, the journal had the following response:

I am not calling our child Toebean. That’s a terrible nickname.

And it doesn’t make any more sense than your friends calling you Padfoot.

I admit that its funny, but...

Sirius furrowed his brow. Did Severus not know he was an animagus?

Perhaps not.

Well, that would have to be rectified. Quickly explaining this, he leaned back with his friends, who watched the next message form with him.

How the fuck did I not know this?

My observation skills have failed me! My reputation as a Slytherin is now at stake...

*I am still rejecting any nicknames your friends come up with. I am not calling our child Toebean.
Even if it is just a nickname...*

Have you not ever seen a toe bean?

Those things are so cute and soft and with her being a puppy, it makes even more sense.

We are not having a puppy, Siri. We're having a baby.

What's the difference?

I turn into a dog.

I'm pregnant.

I'm having a puppy.

Merlin and Morgana, you didn't transform into a dog while pregnant, did you?

Only once before I realized I was pregnant. After that, no. Why?

What if that did something?

I'm pretty sure it didn't since if there was anything to worry about regarding my animagus powers affecting her, Pomfrey would have already told us.

Good point.

"Damn," Remus said. "He worries about you more than you do."

"Which is probably a good thing, given who we're talking about," James said.

"I resent that," Sirius muttered. He pressed the tip of his quill to the page again.

What would you say is a good nickname for our kid since you are so adamantly against "Toebean."

Wow. "Adamantly." I'm impressed.

There was a pause, as though Severus was taking the time to think.

I don't have any nicknames in mind if Casey turns out to be a boy, but I'm pretty sure I'd call her Princess or Sweetie if we're right about her being a girl.

With those, I worry.

Let's be honest: this kid's going to be ridiculously spoiled.

Yeah.

James hummed. "We're all doomed."

"Yeah."

"Well, I'm sticking with Toebean," James decided. "You can't change my mind. We'll just add 'princess' to it if she's gonna be *that* spoiled. Princess Toebean."

Remus hummed. "Somehow that has a nice ring to it."

The portrait door swung open and Lily darted inside.

“Show me the ultrasound or I’ll hex someone.”

Sirius handed her the picture. “Why didn’t Severus let you see the copy I sent him?”

“Because Sev’s an asshole and we nearly got kicked out of class because of it,” she said. Lily unfolded the paper and cooed. “Siri, she’s so cute.”

Sirius shivered and Remus leaned over to him.

“That was frightening,” Remus mumbled.

Sirius agreed. James, though, had sobered, avoiding looking at Lily as she examined the picture. He had opted to hiding his face in a potion’s text.

Lily returned the photo. “I’ve got to get to the library,” she said. “But I’ll see you lads around. Again: she’s adorable, Sirius.”

“Thanks. Have fun,” he called after her. Once she had left, he and Remus looked at James, who still hadn’t lowered the book. “She’s gone, mate.”

James slowly lowered the book. “It’d been a month now, so why does it…”

“Probably because you’ve fancied her since second year,” Remus said.

Sirius elbowed him.

“I’m just saying when you like someone that long, learning to let those feelings go is going to take a while.”

“True, but right now, I think we should just keep our mouths shut.”

Remus hummed. “Good point.”

James sighed again. “I think I’m going to get my stuff and study. Charms test Monday.”

They bid him goodbye. Once he was gone, they exchanged glances.

“There has to be a way to help him get over her faster,” Sirius said. “I can’t stand it when he’s this sad.”

Remus scratched his chin. “There might be, but if there is, I’ve a feeling it’s a potion. I don’t think we want to obliviate him. Might make the whole thing worse if done incorrectly.”

“Valid point…”

“Also, I fear what messing with his mind that way would do to him.”

“Well, we wouldn’t *really* be messing.”

“Maybe not, but still…”

Sirius hummed, scratching his chin. “Well, there’s no harm in finding if there’s any way to find out if we can do it, yeah? And if he’s still like this later, we can ask if he’d like that. I just… I don’t feel that this is going to be an easy thing for him. Especially since she and my brother seem to be

getting rather close.”

Remus nodded. “No harm in looking at least,” he agreed.

But there seemed to be more on his mind concerning the idea of it.

Sirius wished that Remus would tell him what worried him about such a course of action. For now, it was just as a suggestion, after all.

James wouldn’t *really* need to forget how he felt for Lily.

How he still feels.

Would he?

Chapter 19

"I told you: if there really had been an issue with me transforming from human to dog and back, we'd have known by now," Sirius said, exasperated. "And I've not dared to transform since I found out. So, really, Sev, I don't know why you're still worrying over it."

Severus sighed, swirling his bottle of butterbeer contemplatively. "I guess I'm worried it might still affect her."

Sirius sighed and shook his head. "You're being silly, but if it helps calm your mind, we can ask Pomfrey at the next check up."

Severus hummed, taking a sip. "Then we'll ask. But I can't promise it won't keep worrying me until we're certain it hasn't done anything," he said. "I'll shut up about it, till then."

"Thank you, love," Sirius said, kissing Severus' cheek.

"Mind if we join you two?"

They looked at Lily and Regulus.

"I don't mind," Severus said.

Sirius shrugged.

It was enough invitation for Lily. Regulus pulled out a chair for her before taking his own.

"Ever the gentleman," Sirius teased.

"Maybe you should try it, sometime," Regulus shot back, smirking.

"Be nice, you two," Lily said.

Severus snorted.

"Where's the fun in that?" Sirius asked, pouting. "What will become of our lives, Reg, if we can't tease each other a bit?"

"I don't know," Regulus replied. "Nothing proper for us brothers, methinks."

"Oh, how horrible. You two may grow up."

"Hey, we're still growing. Sirius sideways—ow!" Regulus laughed, rubbing the ear Lily twisted.

"Be nice to your brother," she snapped. "Really, you two are going to drive me mad at this rate."

"Then I must have gone mad ages ago," Severus said with a smirk. "They've been like this since we were all brats. Yes. Brats."

"Wow. Parent of the year, you'll be," Regulus mumbled.

"I've all the confidence in the world that Casey will be a perfect angel," Severus replied.

"Given who the parents are, I doubt that," Regulus said, grinning. "Your wit, my brother's panache for trouble...she's gonna be a little trouble causing, sarcastic little shit."

Sirius laughed. "I know I shouldn't say this, but I think that'll make me pretty damn proud."

"Same," Severus said, "And a bit scared. What madness will she end up getting into?"

"I'm sure it'll be fine," Lily assured them, "What with you two chasing after her and a gran as awesome as your mum, Sev."

The boys hummed. She had a point.

"Might I ask if you two plan to marry soon or do you intend to wait on that still? You don't have to answer that if you don't want to."

Sirius' eyes widened. "We...actually didn't...I mean..."

"We should be doing something about that after I turn seventeen...right?"

"Yeah, I think so. But we've been so busy with baby related stuff, I think we forgot. I know I did."

"I did, too."

"Does it matter?"

"To us? No. To our parents? Yeah," Sirius said. He turned to Severus, wide eyed. "How are we going to plan a fucking wedding in two months?"

Severus shrugged. "I'm sure we'll figure something out."

"What if I help?" Lily asked. "I can come up with some ideas that we can go over after break. That should reduce some of the stress. Too much stress wouldn't be good for Casey."

Sirius relaxed. "Yes, I think that'd help a lot." Severus nodded.

"Thanks, Lee."

"You're both very welcome," she said, grinning. "And if you like, I wouldn't mind also helping to arrange a baby shower when you're further along."

Sirius stood and walked around the table to embrace her. "Godmother extraordinaire," he said. "And I owe you too much now."

Lily laughed, patting his head. "Just return the favor when I get pregnant myself."

Regulus sputtered and coughed.

"Relax, love," Lily laughed, ruffling Regulus' hair. "I don't want a kid till we're both out of Hogwarts."

"Thank the Gods," he said. "I'm not ready to be a dad, even if I'm cool with being an uncle."

"Would you say these idiots are ready?" she asked.

Regulus glanced at Sirius and Severus. He snorted, shaking his head. "No. They can pretend all they like, but they're not."

"Well that's points for confidence," Sirius muttered.

"And yet, I think it true," Severus admitted. "If not for my mother, I'm pretty sure we'd be

panicking all over the place.”

“A toast then,” Lily proposed, raising her glass of butterbeer high, “To Madam Prince for being one of the most awesome moms in the world.”

“More like *the* most awesome mom in the world,” Sirius corrected as they clinked their glasses. “The only reason I’m glad she’s not my mom is because of this git.”

Severus arched a brow at him, but Severus just grinned. He laughed when Severus rolled his eyes.

“So, what are you planning to do for the hols?” Severus asked. “Going home or staying?”

“I’m going home,” Lily said. “My parents are taking me and my sister to Spain for a week.”

“I’ll be going home, too,” Regulus said.

Sirius’ smile faltered. “What about Mum and Dad?”

Regulus shrugged.

“Reg, do they know about you and Lily?”

“No. It’s not something that I want to tell them over owl post. Mum would send a howler and I’d rather this not be advertised to the school.”

“You could just stay at Prince Manor if you really don’t want to stay at school for the holiday,” Severus offered.

Regulus smiled gently. “Thanks, but I really should talk to my parents about us,” he squeezed Lily’s hand. “They won’t understand at first, but I have to hope that since I can get along with them or at least try to, they’ll listen. If it gets out of hand, then I’ll floo over to the manor.”

“I admire your optimism, Reg,” Sirius said. “But they won’t listen. Nor even *try* to understand. They’re fanatics when it comes to muggle borns.”

“That’s their loss,” Regulus said. “Not mine. If they don’t like it, well,” he shrugged. “I’ll definitely go over if they can’t be reasonable.”

“Regulus, they’re *never* reasonable,” Sirius snapped.

“Even so, I will tell them I’m dating Lily.”

Through the conversation, Lily listened quietly. She inhaled slowly.

“I can’t help that I’ve muggle parents, but I don’t want to cause a rift between you and your family.”

“You won’t be,” Regulus assured her.

Severus nudged Sirius, who nodded in agreement.

They bade goodbye, leaving enough coin to pay for all four of them.

#

“I’m worried about Reg,” Sirius admitted, lying beside Severus in their hidden room. “His

relationship with Lily's been received rather well, but my parents. Particularly Mum..."

Severus hushed him. "He'll be fine. He's stronger and brave than most Slytherins older than us. I don't think we need to worry as much as you feel you should. And he is always going to be welcome at my place. My mum wouldn't let any of us suffer more than what can't be prevented. And if Regulus and Lily are meant to be, it'll happen."

Sirius hummed. "I guess that's true."

Severus leaned in and kissed him. Sirius returned it, pulling him closer.

"We should do some homework," Severus said between kisses.

"Fuck homework," Sirius replied, sliding his hand under Severus' shirt. "It's not due for three fucking weeks. How about we shag instead?"

"In a few hours we'll be heading back to my place," Severus reminded him. "And we can shag as much as we like in my room."

"True, but we can also shag now," Sirius countered. "And it's not like we're not going to want to shag later anyway." He nibbled Severus' lower lip. "To add, while I cannot promise how I'll be in the future, I can guarantee that I am extremely horny right now and not nauseas at all."

Severus hummed, moving to kiss Sirius' neck. He licked a stripe along a vein.

Sirius arched, thigh rubbing against Severus' groin.

Severus hummed, grinding down on Sirius' leg.

"Let me take care of you, Love," Severus purred. "I wanna take my time with you," he continued, fingers pushing Sirius' shirt buttons through their loops to expose his chest. "I want to watch you fall apart."

Sirius bucked, cursing, as Severus dragged his tongue over Sirius' sensitive breast.

They'd grown a bit. He usually didn't pay much attention to that, but now as Severus played with them, he couldn't ignore that this part of his body was changing just as much as the rest of him.

At the very least, Severus didn't seem to mind the way his breasts had grown.

A rough pinch to one nipple, while the other was sucked, had him arching again, heat building low in his abdomen. Sirius hissed, running his fingers through Severus' hair.

"Fuck!"

Severus hummed, running his tongue over the bud, one hand moving down between Sirius' legs. A finger slipped inside him, massaging the vaginal muscles clenching around the digit. Another finger pressed against his perineum.

Severus moved down, trailing kisses down Sirius' chest and abdomen, dipping his tongue briefly into the divot of his navel.

Sirius sat up so to watch Severus close his mouth around Sirius' cock. It was difficult to move much with Severus' finger probing inside.

He spread his knees wider, allowing his body to stretch as another finger sought its way inside him.

Sirius cursed as the fingers pushed in and out of him in tandem with the suction along his cock.

“Sev, I’m gonna cum...”

Severus gripped the base of his cock, squeezing and let off, smirking.

“Not yet you aren’t,” he replied.

Sirius barely repressed a shiver at the gleam in Severus’ eyes, the fingers crooked inside him, and the hand grasped almost painfully around his cock.

I’m fucked, he thought, as Severus dragged his tongue over the head of his cock, sliding in a third finger. A gentle suck had Sirius falling back onto the bed, moaning.

“Please, Sev – *oh fuck!*” His vision blurred as his sweet spot was pressed against and rubbed.

“*Fuck-fuck-fuck!!*” he cursed, overwhelmed by need.

Severus chuckled, dragging his tongue along the shaft.

Sirius groaned, tugging at Severus’ hair as he was teased to the edge of completion again. Only to be denied again. Severus hushed him, kissing his inner thigh as Sirius whimpered.

“Please let me come, Sev.”

“Poor baby,” Severus purred, “Don’t you like this?”

“Love it, but I need...”

Severus hushed him, removing his fingers. He hooked his hands under Sirius’ knees and pushed them up. He released one leg, which Sirius rested against his shoulder as Severus eased inside him. Sirius groaned, pulling Severus down to kiss him.

Severus rocked his hips, steadily building pace as his own need began to take over.

“Wanna come?” he growled, “Not gonna last longer, want to feel you come from my cock, Siri.”

Sirius moaned, clenching around Severus, who shuddered.

Severus cursed and gripped Sirius’ cock, stroking him to completion.

Sirius bucked, a choked scream escaping his throat as his orgasm overcame him.

Severus followed not long after, groaning.

After a moment to regain a little strength, Severus slipped out and rolled onto his back.

“*Fuck*,” he gasped.

Sirius laughed, turning to lay his head on Severus’ shoulder.

“That did not go as planned.”

“Oh? I think it went well. Or had you hoped to torture me a little more?”

Severus snorted. “I did intend to torture you a bit more, actually,” he admitted. “I wanted to see you come completely undone at my hand alone.”

Sirius hummed, snuggling closer if he could. "I'd like that, I think, but I think I'd probably end up crying if you went longer."

"That was the aim, initially."

"Not cool," Sirius muttered, smacking Severus' chest lightly.

"Well, then, answer this: one massive earth-shattering orgasm, or multiple orgasms of less intensity."

"That's not a fair question, you fucking wanker," Sirius groaned. "There are drawbacks and benefits to both."

Severus adjusted to lay on his side and kissed Sirius' forehead. "I think you're the kind who'd rather have multiple orgasms rather than one that leaves you so limp and pliant that you can hardly breathe, though I've got to say I think seeing you that debauched would be...well..."

Sirius swallowed, almost abashed by the sweet admiration and desire still in Severus' gaze. His heart hammered. They had a rather intense orgasm just a moment ago and *yet*...

"Maybe something like that would be better explored when we aren't hiding in a classroom we've warded from others," he said. "Like, say, your bedroom at Prince Manor."

Severus grinned and kissed him.

#

Regulus spied his mother speaking with Eileen before the train came to a halt. Sirius squeezed his shoulder gently.

"You don't have to go home with Mom," he said. "You can still come with me and Sev."

"I need to face this," Regulus said, "but if it does go bad, I will go to Prince Manor as soon as I am able. Immediately, if I can."

Sirius exhaled. "Well then, best of luck, Reg," he said.

With that, they filed out of the train with the rest of the students who opted to go home for the holidays. Regulus kissed Lily once before reassuring her that all would be well, regardless what happened in the next three weeks.

As he joined Severus and Sirius, he knew he'd been seen if Walburga's thinned lips were any indication.

For now, she said nothing.

Likely she didn't want to cause a scene.

After a brief conversation, they went their separate ways – Sirius and Severus to Prince Manor. He with his mother to Grimauld Place

Once there, Walburga seized his arm.

"What game are you playing?" she snarled. "Sirius' behavior has been bad enough! This family has enough shame because of him and Severus' behavior. How *dare* you join them! How *dare* you even *touch* that Mudblood?"

Regulus pulled out of her grasp. "I'm not you. I'm not Father. And I don't see how my being in love with someone brings shame to this family. Besides, Severus is half-blood."

"And the last of his line," Walburga screeched. "Eileen and Severus are the last Princes in England! That family has power and influence that you can't even *fathom*! I can handle having a half-blood marry one of my sons, especially if it means having Eileen Prince indebted to me, but I will not have the one heir that will become the Patriarch of this great and noble family *sully* it by bedding and breeding with a Mudblood!"

Regulus fumed, resisting the urge to smack her. She likely wanted to hit him just as much. Instead he took a breath and met her furious glare with his own, resolute.

"I love her, Mother. I didn't expect to fall in love with her, but I did. I'm sorry you find that disgusting because I find her beautiful. She's also a powerful witch. And, to be perfectly honest, this idea of *purity*...such a thing doesn't exist. It never had. I don't see how Lily would ever 'sully' this family's reputation. So far, my whole life...the only thing I see that sullies the Black family is your hate and prejudice. It's ugly. I don't want to be a part of that. Not anymore."

She seized him by the hair and dragged him up the stairs. She threw him into his room.

Regulus fell, banging his shoulder against his bed frame.

"We will discuss this with your father," she snarled. "But you *will* end your relationship with that girl."

The door slammed shut and he could feel the magic, dark and angry, that kept him locked in.

He stood and disrobed, wondering if his shoulder had been bruised along with the maddening pain that numbed his arm.

As he examined his shoulder, he debated if he ought have just gone with Sirius and Severus to Prince Manor anyway and arrange to have a mediated conversation with his parents along with Eileen and his brothers. Eileen wouldn't have allowed Walburga to treat any of them this way in her presence and his parents knew it.

Well, what's done is done, he reminded himself as he cast a mild healing charm on his arms and scalp.

#

"I know the two of you might be eager to have time alone," Eileen teased, smirking. "But I do ask that you keep it in your pants for most of the days."

"Mum!" Severus cried, mortified.

"Oh, relax, Severus, dear," she said. "You and Sirius will have plenty of time to yourselves. But I do want you both to help me plan my Christmas party. Then there's also your homework to get to – which I suggest you both do in the library as I doubt you'll be able to concentrate properly in your bedroom. Also, I want to talk about the wedding and get the baby's room and nursery ready."

Eileen turned from then, then spun around.

"Sirius! Are you showing yet?"

He shook his head.

“No? Well, your chest is developing well.”

“Mum, can we not do this now?” Severus begged, his face redder than a Gryffindor banner.

“I concur,” Sirius mumbled, just as red.

“Fine, but Sirius, we will need to find something to give you a little support so your back doesn’t start hurting too early.”

She allowed them to go their own way and once safe in Severus’ room, Severus banged his head against the door.

“Why?”

“She’s excited to be a grandma?” Sirius suggested. A flick of his wand and their belongings flew to be put aside. “I think that’s a good thing, Sev. She’s received the whole thing better than expected over all.”

Severus sighed. “That’s true. I guess I should cut her a little slack since she’s just excited to be a grandmother.”

Sirius embraced him and kissed him. “Stop scowling. You’re mom’s still the most awesome mom in all the world.”

“I know. But there has to be a way to get her to be more awesome and less...less mom.”

Sirius hummed. “I don’t think so.”

“Casey, you’re fucked.”

“Don’t swear around the baby! They can hear from the womb.”

“I don’t know if you’re that far enough along.”

“Do you want to risk that?”

“You were risking it a couple days ago,” Severus teased, grinning.

Sirius sighed. “Fair point,” he said. “I’ll leave it alone for now, but it’s something we might want to ask Pomfrey next we see her. Along with the effects of one of us being animagi.”

“I’ll add that to my notes, then,” Severus promised, smiling fondly. “Hungry?”

Sirius nodded and they left the room, heading for the kitchen.

There, Severus stopped Sirius, finger pressed to his lips.

Within were voices.

“Thank you, Madam,” one said.

It was old and deep. Male.

Severus and Sirius crept forward.

“For offering your home as our base of operations.”

"I don't mind it," Eileen replied. "If there was any other way I could help, I would do so, Albus."

Severus and Sirius pressed their ears to the door.

"I'm not comfortable with you doing more than this," Moody responded bitterly. "Sometimes I worry why I even told you. There are a number of other places that could be the base, Dumbledore."

"Perhaps so," Dumbledore said. "But none so readily available that can fit all of us. Besides, Madam Prince, I recall that you attended Hogwarts with him."

"I did," she spat. "I never liked him. There was something uncomfortable about him for all his charm. Not that the teachers save yourself noticed it. It doesn't surprise me that he went down this path which puts our children at risk."

"Well, all things considering, I cannot doubt your drive, Madam," Dumbledore said. "I just...the minister won't listen to me on the nature of these disappearances. It worries me deeply. Tom...he's powerful, but we can all agree that there's something broken in him."

"You tried to save him enough times," another man stated. "It's time to give up on saving him, Albus. He needs to be stopped."

"I know, Aberforth," Dumbledore replied quietly. "And I still hope that we're wrong on that. As long as he lives, there must be some humanity left."

"There wasn't in Gellert, no matter what you hoped," Aberforth stated darkly.

The silent was thick.

"All that happened with Gellert is done with. It's over and nothing more will come of it," Dumbledore continued. "In the meantime, we need to get someone inside Tom's ranks so we can adequately find a way to stop him."

"Riddle wants to fill the ranks with angry, young wizards and witches bent on hurting the world as much as he wants," Eileen said. "How can any of us ask someone young enough to risk it?"

"We've offered," two voices said.

"Fabian," Eileen sighed. "Gideon, you can't."

"We're aurors."

"And we're the right age."

"We can do this, Madam Prince. Professor Dumbledore."

"Alastor, would you say that the Prewett lads are trained enough to infiltrate Tom's followers?" Aberforth asked.

"Perhaps," Moody replied. "But even so, we cannot be certain at this time. Riddle is as wily as he is powerful. It may take a wizard that matches that level of wile and power to truly get close enough to be our spy."

"You don't think we could do it, Sir?"

"I do not doubt your tenacity, lads," Moody replied. "Only, there is one wizard who also matches

what Riddle is looking for that *could* do it well enough.”

“Really?” Dumbledore asked. “Who?”

More thick silence...

Then:

“No,” Eileen said. “I won’t allow that.”

“Love, he’s a genius. I’ve seen his spells. I *know* he can do this.”

“He is not of age! And he’s going to be a parent in a matter of months!”

“He will be of age in a few weeks.”

“I am not letting any of you send my child into a snake pit!”

“Most of them will be Slytherins,” Aberforth stated. “Who better to send into a snake pit than another snake?”

“I SAID NO!!!” Eileen shouted. “I would sooner die than let you send my son to that lunatic! I don’t care how well prepared you make him! I won’t let you use my son in this way! I will go to Riddle if you need someone to be your spy, and you can keep using my home as your base, but please, Albus. Don’t place this on Severus.”

“We will not, Madam,” Albus said. “But we may revisit it in the future when he *is* of age *and* graduated from school. In the meantime, Mistert Prewett, I leave the task of infiltrating Riddle’s ranks to you both.”

Severus knew they ought to go.

He knew he should take hold of Sirius’ hand and lead him to a different kitchen, or even portkey to town.

And from the look Sirius had, he agreed. But neither moved, as though frozen in place.

And then it was too late to go and hide.

The door swung open. Eileen gasped, pale.

“Severus,” she whispered. “Sirius.”

“How much did you lads hear?” Moody asked.

“There is no need to find that out now,” Dumbledore said, raising a hand. “It’s been decided already, so what does it matter?”

“It matters,” Eileen said. “Boys, how much did you hear?”

Severus cleared his throat and met his mother’s dark eyes. “Enough.”

“Well, they’re at least mature enough,” Aberforth said. “And the Prewett lads aren’t much older than either of them.”

“Mum, what is this?”

Eileen exhaled. “I didn’t want you to find out. Certainly not like this.”

“*Mum.*”

“We are...a vigilante group that I have gathered together and have named the Order of the Phoenix,” Dumbledore answered. “Take a seat and I’ll explain.”

Chapter 20

Regulus had never understood Sirius' temper.

He'd always been the calm one. The rational one.

He usually didn't see much point in getting on their parents' bad side. Why bother when it leads to pain and punishment?

In hindsight he'd never been angry enough to want to hex anyone, let alone his own father, who ranted about the "shame" he was bringing on them for falling in love with Lily.

And as his parents tore vehemently at her and his decision to be with her, he defended her just as vehemently, trying to make them see reason.

But they wouldn't listen.

They never will, a voice that sounded so similar to Sirius' said.

In the end, he sighed.

"I'm not breaking up with her just because you want me to," he said. "I'm not a traitor for falling in love with her. You don't even know her. And you won't even try to know her, so until you two reevaluate how you see the world, I'm going to stay with the Princes."

"You dare to defy us?" Orion spat.

"Yes," Regulus said. "I suppose I do."

"How dare you?!" Walburga snarled. "Regulus, you will do as we say."

"I won't," he said, "I'm done pretending to be the perfect son. I can't do that anymore. You're my parents. I love you both, but now I get why Sirius fights you so much."

He shoved his hands in his pockets, ensuring that he still had his things, shrunken down to fit in them, and approached the fireplace.

"If you walk through that hearth, don't you dare come back!" Orion shouted.

Regulus paused, turning to look at his parents.

He was stunned.

They'd really...

Yes.

Yes they would.

He took a deep breath and released it.

"Then I guess this is goodbye."

He took a bit of floo powder, entered the hearth, and faced them one last time.

“Prince Manor,” he said, dropping the powder.

#

Sirius and Severus were in the receiving room, doing some homework in the warm room, when the hearth sparked and Regulus entered.

He looked at Sirius and broke down. Sirius stood and embraced him.

“I’ll let Mum know,” Severus said, allowing the brothers some time alone.

Sirius led Regulus to a chair and encouraged him to sit down.

“What happened?” he asked. “What did they do?”

“They...I’m not entirely sure yet, but they might’ve disowned me.”

Sirius sighed. *What a fucking crazy day*, he thought, rubbing Regulus’ back.

“Well, then you and I can start a new legacy for the Black Family.”

This gleaned a weak chuckle from Regulus.

“Yeah, maybe we can do that. Erm...is it really okay for me to stay here?”

“Of course it is,” Eileen said, approaching them. “Regulus, Love, how about you and I have a chat over tea? Tell me what happened and I’ll do what I can to help. In the meantime, Twinkle is getting a room ready for you to use. Sirius, Severus, dinner will be ready soon.”

“Okay,” Severus said. “Good luck, Reg.”

“Thanks.”

Once Eileen and Regulus were gone, Sirius swore.

“Maybe I should’ve gone back with him just to be sure they didn’t hurt him.”

“Absolutely not,” Severus snarled, “Like I’d risk that.”

“They wouldn’t dare.”

“I don’t trust your parents not to,” he admitted. “I never liked them much, but I didn’t really hate them till they told us to get an abortion. Besides, I think we need to worry about what they’ll do now.”

Sirius hummed, leaning against him.

“Sev, are we going to talk about the Order?”

“Yeah, I think we should,” he agreed, “But maybe not in such an open place.”

“Why? Regulus will likely find out, too, and your mom already knows that we know.” Sirius narrowed his eyes. “Unless,” he lowered his voice, “you intend to join them when you graduate?”

“I’m not planning anything,” Severus assured him. “But, well, I don’t want to raise our child in a world where there’s a lunatic running around using people’s hate to fuel his power.”

Sirius stared at Severus, frowning.

“Well, as much as I find that distasteful, too, I also don’t like the idea of losing you when I’ve worked so hard to get you back.”

Severus squeezed his hand.

“I don’t intend to do anything yet. It’s just something to think on and certainly not something to think on without extensive research. I’m not going to do anything right away. I swear it, but I can’t...I know I probably shouldn’t have any fantastical ideas regarding what they’re asking me to do...”

“They want you to spy on a homicidal maniac,” Sirius said. “What really gets under my skin are the words ‘spy’ and ‘homicidal’ and ‘maniac’ for good reasons, Sev.”

“Okay, so I’ll list you in the ‘Severus will *not* risk his life reenacting 007’ column.”

“I don’t know what you mean by Double-O Seven.”

“Moniker for a Muggle movie character.”

“Would I like him?”

“Yeah.”

“Then it is something to explore at a later time.”

Severus grinned. “I fully agree.”

Sirius waved his wand, the papers and quills lifting into the air. “Shall we put this away for a bit?” he asked, smirking.

Severus arched a brow. “Sure,” he said slowly. “Should I be worried?”

“Maybe,” Sirius said. “But I’m pretty sure you’ll like it.”

“So I should not worry.”

“That’s up to you. Do I make you worry?”

“All the fucking time.”

“I promise it won’t be that bad.”

“Let’s hope.”

“What do you mean let’s hope? You wound me, Sev.”

They paused in their banter as Eileen and Regulus returned. Eileen arched a brow at the floating parchment and quills.

“I hope you don’t intend to stain the carpeting, boys. Otherwise, I might have to take a leaf out of your teachers’ books and have you clean it up without magic.”

“Why make us do it the hard way when the easy way is so much faster?” Severus asked.

“Because then you don’t end up repeating it,” Regulus said. “I’d have thought a sixth year would

know that better than a fifth, but then again, Sirius is my brother.”

“Hey!”

Eileen cleared her throat.

“Dinner will be ready in an hour,” she told them. “And Alastor will be joining us tonight.”

“So you’re not mad at him?” Severus asked.

“I am, but that’s between him and me and we will discuss it later.”

With that, she left.

Once out of earshot, Severus shuddered exaggeratedly.

“I don’t even want to know what ‘discuss it later’ actually means.”

“Mature,” Regulus snorted.

“As if you wouldn’t react the same if it was your mother.”

“I’m still going to say you lack basic maturity.”

“For sixteen?” Severus asked. “I doubt that. I can’t be the only one out there that would much rather go thinking that my mother is sexless.”

“But then how would you have been born?” Regulus said, smirking.

Severus sent a mild stinging hex at him.

Regulus yelped and rubbed the injury, scowling. “No need to be rude.”

“I can think of worse things to do other than hex you, Reg.”

Sirius shook his head, letting them banter. At least Regulus seemed to be feeling better. If he chose to express that by being a little shit, then who was he to judge?

~July 1969~

Summer in London wasn’t much different from the rest of the year.

It just rained a little less.

The three boys stared out the window, feeling as gloomy as the weather looked.

Sirius glanced at Severus.

He’d been holding together well enough, and even now, seemed to be okay. He knew he wasn’t, though. Not with his mother in Azkaban.

Sirius thought it too unfair. Severus’ mother killed his father to protect him.

He wanted to protest it aloud, but his parents told him not to, if only for Severus’ sake. He asked if Severus would prefer that privately, late one night, and Severus nodded.

I don’t want to talk about it, he had said. If I change my mind and decide that I do, then you’ll be

the first to know.

It was enough for now.

Sirius approached Severus and leaned against him.

“I gave it a lot of thought,” he said.

Severus looked at him.

“Our parents want us to get married, but to be honest, we don’t have to get married for me to know I love you.”

Severus blushed, and looked away from Sirius. “Can we not right now?”

Sirius was saddened by that. “Just saying.”

“I know, but I’m still not very comfortable with that much affection, Siri.”

Sirius hummed. “Okay.”

But you will be comfortable with it one day, won’t you?

He hoped so, even if he dared not give the thought voice. He hugged him for a moment then went to grab the book he was reading. It was a Muggle book he and Severus had snuck in from the closest Muggle library, which Severus had gotten a library card for.

Sirius tucked it under his jumper and skittered back to the library with it. It was risky – his parents wouldn’t care that it was a library book. They’d destroy it and also the other books they brought. Severus spied him, a little confused, then startled.

“Are you mad?”

“I want to read it.”

“Why here? If your mom and dad find out –”

“They won’t,” he assured Severus.

He looked around and sought out a book of similar size with a cover sleeve, which he then used to hide the cover of the library book.

“See? We can just do this. They’ll never know.”

“I don’t know, Siri...”

“Don’t you want to find out what happens next?”

“Yes, but it’s too risky to do so during the day.”

“Only if we get caught. We won’t get caught. Dad’s gone and Mum’s downstairs with her friends. She won’t bother us. We’re fine, I promise, Sev.”

Severus glanced at the door nervously, as though expecting Walburga to march inside any moment. He exhaled and sat beside him.

“Fine, but we *better* not get caught with this,” he said.

Sirius grinned and turned to the page where they left off.

~December 1977~

“No, a little more center than that,” Eileen directed.

Severus rolled his eyes.

Well, if she wanted it more center, then it will be in the center.

He cast a levitating charm and directed it to the center of the eastern wall in front of one of the large windows.

“Excellent,” Eileen said.

“You know, you could do this yourself, Mum,” Severus pointed out. “It’s not that heavy.”

“Your stamina is better than mine, these days, Severus,” Eileen said. “I’m afraid I’d only be able to move it a couple inches at a time before feeling the strain of it. You’re young enough that it only takes a minute and you don’t break a sweat.”

On the other side of the hall, where the Black brothers were hanging up other decorations, an evergreen wreath flew after Regulus, who threatened to light it afire.

Eileen sighed and went over to them.

The wreath fell to the ground and needles fell free of their branches.

Severus summoned the décor for the tree, letting the lights, garlands, and baubles find their place around the tree before the tree skirt went underneath and the topper on the highest point.

There was enough gold and silver to balance it out that one could not tell whose house was being honored more, though Eileen had certainly built quite a fine collection of Christmas baubles of every color possible.

Still, he’d argue Ravenclaw given how many blue baubles were there. Trust his mother to show her eagle pride any chance she liked.

The topper was of an ancient deity known as the Holly King.

The tree skirt had images of mistletoe and holly leaves that danced around depending on the music playing. At that moment, the music in question was upbeat and muggle, so it looked like the holly and mistletoe were bouncing around rather than dancing.

Which Severus decided was a more apt description anyway.

With that finished, he stretched and went to help Eileen reign in Sirius and Regulus. Severus figured they’d gotten their hands onto too much cocoa or sugar.

He wrapped his arms around Severus’ waist, kissing his cheek.

“Having fun?”

“More than I probably should,” Sirius said. “Besides, I’d rather Regulus not have to think about it all, you know? I’d rather he be distracted.”

“Nothing new, then,” Severus teased. He kissed Sirius again. “You’ll both have to deal with your parents eventually.”

“I’d rather that be a long way off,” Sirius admitted. Severus brushed his fingers against Sirius’ stomach. “But somehow I’ve a feeling they’ll still be coming to this Christmas party.”

“We’ll see,” Severus said.

He doubted it, though. He had never known anyone to be so rude as to revoke invitations before, but sometimes he wondered if his mother would dare if pushed hard enough.

Well, telling someone that they’ve forfeited their invitation to an event might be rude and insulting, but it would also be a more acceptable sin compared to what could happen.

Sirius turned and kissed the tip of his nose.

“What?”

“You were scowling,” Sirius said. “Whatever your thinking of, leave it be for now. It’s almost Christmas.”

“Fine,” Severus sighed. “I promise nothing, though. Need any help over here? I noticed you were enjoying causing Reg trouble.”

“Always fun and easy to do without help, thanks,” Sirius said, grinning. “Though if you want to join in on that, I certainly won’t stop you.”

Severus rolled his eyes, an affectionate smile on his face. Sirius cried out when a tinsel bow smacked into him – more startled than frightened – and stuck to his cheek. He rounded on Regulus.

“This better not be charmed with a permanent sticking charm, Regulus!”

“I would never be that cruel!”

“All right, you two,” Eileen said, wand out, ready to pry them apart if it got violent.

Severus didn’t tell her not to bother. It wouldn’t get that bad.

“I think that’s enough horse play for now.”

“Yes, Ma’am,” Regulus said.

“Fine,” Sirius said, pulling the tinsel free and rubbed the adhesive off his cheek. “Is there anything else you’d like us to do?”

“Only to go to town and pick up an order of paint so we can get started on the baby’s room and nursery,” she said. “Though, I’d rather that Regulus and Severus handle that themselves.”

“I can handle picking up paint.”

“I’m less concerned about your strength and more about the fumes from the paint.”

They hummed.

That could be a bit of a concern.

“Do you need us to do that tonight?” Severus asked, casting a tempus charm.

Eileen stared at the clock for a moment, then shook her head.

“After breakfast tomorrow will be fine,” she said. “We may as well go together, do some holiday shopping, too.”

“Cool,” Sirius said. “In the muggle world?”

“Indeed.”

“Never done much in the muggle world before,” Regulus admitted.

Sirius shrugged.

“Done a little, but not as much as I think I’d have liked to. Most of what I could do back at Grimauld was go to the library nearby.”

“There was a theatre nearby, too,” Severus pointed out.

“Yes, but we went once and my father nearly stripped the skin off both of us.”

“Oh, yeah.” Severus glanced at his mother, who looked livid. He swallowed nervously. “Mum, it was years ago. We’re all right.”

“No, it is not all right,” she snarled.

Eileen took a breath, exhaling slowly.

“But there’s nothing for it, now, as I suppose it was while I was in Azkaban.”

“It wasn’t nearly as bad as I just said it was,” Sirius said, looking contrite. “I didn’t mean to upset you, Eileen.” Eileen smiled gently and patted his cheek.

“Oh, Sirius, I’m not angry at you. I’m angry at Orion for thinking he can treat you boys like that. I can’t help that I wasn’t there to protect you boys, then, but I am here now. I might not be able to make many changes, but I can help where it is in my power to. As long as you two are here, you’re under my protection and your parents cannot, will not, touch you with harmful intent.”

The brothers smiled brightly at that. Eileen pulled them into a hug.

When she released them, she wiped her eyes of unshed tears.

“Now, enough solemn talk and let’s go have dinner. We’ve two more days to get this place presentable for Yule and the more rested we are, the faster we’ll be ready.”

#

They arrived in London around ten o’clock.

Eileen dragged Sirius away, instructing Severus to keep an eye on Regulus. From there, she’d pulled him to a toy store and promptly led him to an area for children under the age of two years old.

“Whoa.”

“Shall I get a cart? Some of these are rather big.”

“That might be a good idea,” he said. Eileen patted his shoulder and let him be as she went to retrieve a shopping cart.

Sirius perused the shelves, staring at the variety of toys.

There were no baby’s quidditch supplies nor snitch patterned bibs, but there were balls, dolls, building blocks, puzzles, cars, and so much more than Sirius had ever seen.

When Eileen returned, he gathered his top choices and dumped them in the cart.

“Nothing gendered?”

“Until I’m certain of the baby’s sex, it might be better to wait on items geared toward one gender or the other.” Eileen nodded approvingly before leading him to another aisle lined with boxes after boxes of baby furniture.

Again, he opted for ones that were obviously for either boys or girls, Eileen kept lookout when he used magic to get ones higher than both of them down, easing it down onto the bottom shelf of the cart.

Only caught by one – a little girl – a simple oblivation charm was all that was needed.

The girl ran off to find her mother right after.

“Try to keep the magic to as close to the barest minimum, Sirius,” Eileen said, hands on her hips. Sirius grinned at her.

“I’ll do my best,” he promised.

“Aside from all this, how are preparations for the wedding coming?”

Sirius chuckled nervously as he followed Eileen to the check out register.

“Well, about that...”

He explained how he and Severus had actually forgotten that they also needed to plan for that, and Lily’s offer to help plan a small ceremony on such short notice.

“Well, in that case, send Lily a letter to let her know that I’ll fund whatever you agree on. In fact, maybe see if she can come to the manor for Christmas. It’d be nice to see her again. I did find her a lovely young woman.”

“She’s actually out of the country right now and I don’t think she’ll be back for Christmas, but I’ll ask when she’ll be back.”

“Good. If she is, invite her to come to the manor for New Years, then. That way, I can see what ideas she has come up with for you and Severus. And if not, then the four of us will meet at Hogsmeade at the next available time. I’m sure we can make something work out.”

“Will do,” Sirius agreed.

They parked the cart in front of the register and began piling the items on the belt.

Chapter 21

Sirius pulled the robes backward, stretching the fabric over his still flat stomach.

The swell was there, but still so small that it was nearly invisible.

“What are you doing?”

He released the fabric and turned to Severus.

“Wondering when the hell she’ll start to show. I know it’ll be another couple weeks, for sure...”

“Does it bother you?”

“Not really,” Sirius admitted. “A part of me is awed at times, but now I’m starting to panic a little because once she starts to show, it won’t be just a few select people who we know and trust that will know that we’re going to be parents. Then there’s the changes my body’s going through.”

He cupped his chest. The breasts were nearly nonexistent, but they had swollen a little bit. Not enough to be noticed save by him.

“I know to expect it and I keep telling myself its normal. There’s no reason to get irrational about these changes, but for some reason, I can’t make the emotional side of myself to see it that way.”

He waited for Severus to respond, but he said nothing. Then, he said: “Erm...I don’t know how to reassure you about the changes your body’s going through.”

Sirius watched him, wondering what Severus was trying to say.

“But where I stand, it’s miraculous. I know you were born with the ability to have children, but sometimes it was just something I knew and it never registered, but this...that you’re actually able to have my child...*our* child, well...just know you can talk to me about it if you’re feeling down about these changes you’re going through. You can talk to anyone of us, really. But, well...I guess the whole idea of it...I’m sometimes blown away that it’s not a dream. That we’re really going to have a family. And I know I might have to say this a lot over the next few weeks, but...well...I love you and the changes you’re going through, honestly, make you more desirable to me.”

Sirius smiled gently. “I promise you, it’s not a dream. And thank you, Sev,” he said. “So, now what? We’ve still time before the guests get here, right?”

Severus grinned and closed the door behind him. He approached Sirius and gripped his hips and pulled him into an embrace.

He kissed Severus, thumb brushing against Sirius’ cheekbone before the hand lowered to his chest, gently squeezing the soft swell of Sirius’ breasts.

Sirius hissed at a light pinch to sensitive nipples, and he felt liquid warmth flow through him, settling low in his belly. Severus pinched again, a little harder, and Sirius wriggled as he began to harden.

“Sev...”

“Talk to me,” he said, moving from Sirius’ lips to his neck.

Sirius cursed, shuddering at the electricity that shot down his spine.

He gripped his wand and waved it at the door, locking it.

The sound startled Severus, who paused. Once reassured they'd not be interrupted, he returned to nibbling at the skin beneath Sirius' earlobe.

"Tell me what you want, Love."

Sirius groaned. "Fuck me," he hissed. "I want you to fuck me."

He shivered again at Severus' throaty chuckle.

Severus backed away and began to undress. Sirius tore at his own clothes, as though trying to race him. Once bare, Severus pulled him into another kiss, hands massaging Sirius' sensitive breasts before pinning him against the wall.

He lowered his head and his hands over Sirius' skin, pressing where he was growing softer and rounder. Severus sucked and licked at Sirius' nipples, taking them into his mouth before moving further downward.

He pressed kisses over Sirius' stomach, feeling the beginnings of the mound that cocooned Casey.

"Fuck, Siri..." he whispered.

Severus nipped at the V of Sirius' hips before gripping the base of his cock and swallowed around it, sliding down as much as he could before his gag reflex would kick in.

He sucked and licked till Sirius' cock was at full stand, before moving his fingers to the folds behind the ball sack, and slid two fingers into the slick, wet canal.

Sirius spread his legs a little wider, allowing the fingers to probe as Severus sucked. Sirius let the pleasure wash over him, chasing his orgasm.

He moaned a warning and Severus released him, squeezing around the base of Sirius' cock.

He removed his fingers and stood, licking the digits before loosening his grip and turned Sirius around so his front was to the wall.

Severus took one of Sirius's hands in his own, fingers entwined, as he mumbled a protection spell and eased inside him. Sirius groaned, cursing again, as Severus began to rock his hips.

Severus pressed his forehead to Sirius' shoulder.

"Fuck...yes..." Severus whispered, thrusting harder. "Fuck..."

He reached around with his spare hand and gripped Sirius' cock.

He stroked him in time with his thrusts. Sirius gasped as pleasure rebuilt inside him. He squeezed around Severus' cock as his orgasm hit, coating the wall in semen.

Severus moaned and gasped. Sirius felt his seed spurt inside him.

Severus' cock slipped out and Sirius felt the slickness drip down his thighs. He kissed Sirius' shoulder again, massaging his sides gently as he did.

Sirius moved away from Severus to grab his wand and cast a quick Tempus charm.

“When are we supposed to be downstairs again?”

“We’ve time enough to clean up, Love,” Severus assured him.

Sirius hummed and set his wand down, the golden ethereal clock shimmered and vanished as he sat down and pulled Severus with him. He nuzzled against him, arms wrapped around Severus’ waist.

“I don’t think we can nap long.”

“Shut up. You said we’ve time.”

Severus chuckled and combed his fingers through Sirius’ hair. “Just don’t fall asleep, then.”

“Fine.”

#

Sirius and Severus raced into the hall an hour late, breathless and flushed. Eileen arched a brow at them, but otherwise did not rebuke them for losing track of time. Regulus wiggled his eyebrows at them, smirking, behind her back.

“Sirius! Severus!” an elder Prewett matron greeted, approaching them. “Rumor is that you’re planning to wed early next year.”

“Erm...yes, Madam,” Severus said.

Sirius chuckled nervously.

“Then why hasn’t it been officially announced? What of invitations?”

“We decided to have a private ceremony,” Sirius said. “Friends and family only.”

“Eugenia,” Eileen said as she approached. “You aren’t bothering my boys, aren’t you?”

“Well, I’d hope not,” Madam Prewett said with an airy laugh. Severus led Sirius around the women, telling them they were going to get something to eat.

“Why do I feel that’s going to be the theme of tonight’s conversations?” Severus asked.

“Given we’re rushing things up since we got a bun baking, a lot of them might be interested in our reasons for marrying so quickly,” Sirius guessed.

“So what? We shouldn’t have to resign ourselves to them poking their noses where it doesn’t belong.”

“Maybe not, but it’s only a matter of weeks now before everyone will know, so I’m wondering if we ought to just *tell* them all.”

“But are you ready for that?”

“Not really.”

“Then we don’t have to tell them shit,” Severus said. They paused at the buffet line, piling food

onto plates. They found empty seats and began to eat.

“I’ll be showing soon, anyway,” Sirius said. “So even though I’m not entirely ready to tell anyone else, I feel that the sooner we get it out of the way, the better.”

Severus chewed contemplatively then swallowed.

“Let’s ask Mum first before we say anything. Tonight might not be the best time. Hold still,” he reached over and batted a bug away from Sirius’ ear. It spiraled away from them. Sirius thanked him, rubbing his ear where Severus had accidentally scratched him in getting the bug away from him.

“I agree we should ask her before we do anything about letting people know that I’m pregnant,” Sirius said, stabbing at the slice of roast beef on his plate. “But I don’t think I’m ever going to be ready to announce it, so we may as well just get it out of the way.” He took a bite.

For a time, they ate silently, each lost to their own thoughts and contemplations. Once they’ve had their fill, they sought Eileen out and asked her opinion.

She laughed, telling them that she thought it a good idea.

It was Christmas.

A time for joy and celebration!

“Do you want to do so now or do you need more time to gather a bit of Gryffindor courage.”

They exchanged a look. Severus squeezed Sirius’ hand.

“Sooner the better,” Sirius decided.

Eileen nodded and cast a *Sonorus* spell on herself so to gather their attention.

Sirius swallowed and Severus squeezed his hand. “It’s okay.” Sirius gulped again, mouth suddenly gone dry, and faced the crowd.

“So, some of you might’ve been wondering why Severus and I decided to marry before we graduated. Well...” he inhaled. “We...we decided that because we’re expecting.”

The reaction was slow, as though the guests had been stunned. Then one, two, five, thirty hands began to clap in applause till the whole room sounded with applause.

Sirius guessed polite applause, though. The older generations might not be so understanding, but they he didn’t think they’d dare to send them insults tonight.

In between accepting congratulations – and he could read from the expression on their faces which were more genuine – he kept an eye on those who approached Eileen. Especially when Madam Prewett asked if she was all right with her first grandchild being conceived before a proper marriage was made.

“Every child is a blessing,” Eileen had said, sounding kind, but there was a kind of sharpness in her voice that cut. As though she dared any who heard to question her. “And they want to keep their child. That is enough for me. Marriage is more a political formality anyway.”

Severus squeezed his hand. “It didn’t go as bad as I thought it would.” Sirius smiled and agreed.

The following morning's edition of *the Daily Prophet* made Eileen nearly spit her tea.

The boys watched, afraid as she scanned the paper furiously.

"Mom?"

Eileen shot her head up, eyes blazing.

"Are you okay?" Severus asked.

"Yes," she said. "But I've an emergency to get to. Twinkle!" Eileen stood, leaving the paper in her haste. Regulus reached over and pulled it over. He paled.

"Bloody hell," he whispered. "I didn't know the press was allowed at your mum's parties, Sev."

"They aren't," Severus said, snatching the paper.

Sirius read over his shoulder:

On Yuletide night, I, Rita Skeeter, was privy to attend the private function hosted by Madam Eileen Prince, exonerated murderess and matriarch of the once proud and noble Prince family.

There, the celebration was filled with many great surprises from Madam Prince's affair with Auror Alastor 'Mad-Eye' Moody (article on page 10) to the announcement of Sirius Black's pregnancy by the sole heir to the Prince family, Severus Prince.

Many have followed the engagement between the Princes and the Blacks since its inception nearly ten years ago, and such followers I dare say must be abuzz with excitement for the birth of the baby.

Others, I'm told, are wary of the idea of an illegitimate heir to two quite powerful families.

Perhaps the child's legitimacy is the reason behind why they seek to rush a wedding despite Madam Prince's insistence that "marriage is a political formality."

How the Blacks feel about the child is less amicable.

"There's nothing to be done of it now," one relative who wished for anonymity said. "While it was still unknown, they could have changed their mind. Now doing so would bring more shame onto the family names of Black and Prince. Not that either of the boys, Sirius especially, cared for that."

Both boys are still in their sixth year at Hogwarts.

We must ask: is it wise to keep their baby, then?

They've still another year of schooling and it'd be better for them to focus on such rather than be so drastically distracted by the duties of parenthood...

Severus nearly ripped the paper, teeth gnashing.

Skeeter.

Severus remembered her from their earliest years at Hogwarts.

She was a Ravenclaw who had several friends in Slytherin. She was in Andromeda's graduating class, if he recalled rightly...they'd have been second years.

He remembered her to be a ruthless gossip and ruined her enemies by exposing their secrets.

Seems she found her calling as paparazzi.

"Well, I guess everyone at school's going to know, now," Sirius said, trying to remain lighthearted. His voice shook, though, as though trying to hold back his own rage. "Think it was Mom or one of our aunts, Reg? Bet it was one of them. Or Narcissa. I could see Narcissa offering a quote."

Regulus grabbed the paper and balled it, then set it aflame.

"You're both going to be fine, no matter what anyone says or thinks."

"Thanks," Sirius said.

Severus wasn't so sure. He didn't think their classmates would judge them. They might worry about it, a little, but most, he guessed, would be excited for them. So far the reactions they've had were fairly positive and understanding if not fully supportive.

And with the article circulating, well...

Who knew what his mother intended to do now?

#

Eileen marched toward the *Daily Prophet*, teeth gnashing as she tried to rein her fury in until she was in sight of this Skeeter woman. There'd be no reason to bring her anger out on anyone save for the reporter and editor.

A hand seized her arm and she spun around, whipping her wand out under Alastor's nose. On recognizing him, she lowered it.

"Eileen, what are you doing?"

"Have you not read today's paper?"

"I read it. Even so, you can't just march into the *Prophet* and demand retribution."

"Then what *should* I do?"

"Come to me. File a report. Do this properly."

"They went after my child and grandchild! How can you expect me to stand aside?"

"I don't. I expect you to be smart about your payback," Alastor said. "Come with me, file a report against Skeeter for trespassing and publishing articles without your consent. If you go through the proper channels, you can prevent her from doing this again."

Eileen crossed her arms, eyeing the building. She exhaled.

"All right," she said, "But I'd feel better giving her a piece of my mind."

"I know you would," he said, offering his arm to her.

Eileen looped her arm around his elbow and they apparated to the ministry. Alastor led her to the DMLE's Auror Department. He gathered the paperwork for her to file and led her to his desk.

Eileen filled out the papers silently, aware of the looks she and Alastor were receiving. She didn't care about Skeeter's article on her and her relationship with Alastor.

They might have met as criminal and arresting auror, but their romantic relationship was barely a year old and they'd been friends since her parole. Besides, he had been nothing but kind to her and especially to her son.

It had worried her at first, but she was glad that Severus had Alastor in his life. He needed a positive male role model and Alastor filled that role better than anyone she could have hoped for.

(She still wasn't fond that he suggested Severus become a spy for the Order of the Phoenix, but neither Alastor nor Severus brought it up again since it was first given voice. She preferred to think that they'd put it out of their minds.)

The files themselves were of two complaints. The first was trespassing onto private property:

Skeeter had not obtained any permission or invitation to be at Eileen's holiday party. Then she used what she'd seen and witnessed for her own gain, exposing facts that were not consented to exposure.

The second was harassment of a minor:

Sirius might be of age, but Severus still had a few weeks until he turned seventeen. Until that exact moment of his birth, he remained an underage wizard. Add to that, with the baby...well, who did that to a child? By now, the baby had a heartbeat, the baby was going to be showing soon, and the baby was most definitely wanted, damn the bitch!

Once finished, she reviewed the parchment and went to the desk auror, handing them over to her before returning to Alastor's desk.

"Feel better?"

"Not really."

"You will in a bit. The prophet might not be able to recant the articles, but Skeeter will be reprimanded for the way she went about getting her information."

"I'd still like to at least hex the bitch," she said, scowling.

"I know, but I'd rather not have to arrest you for letting your temper get the better of you."

Eileen sighed, "And I'd rather not get arrested again," she agreed. "I suppose self-preservation wins in the end." Alastor took her hand in his, squeezing gently.

"You're a fierce woman, Eileen, and a fiercer mother."

Eileen chuckled, smiling at him. "Look at us: I'm the Ravenclaw rushing into situations like a Gryffindor and it takes a Gryffindor to remind me to use my head."

"So long as I'm not always the voice of reason, I think that'll be all right," Alastor assured her, kissing her wrist. "Now that you've calmed down, do you need to get back to the boys?"

"No. I trust they'll do fine without me a little longer."

“In that case, can I interest you in some tea? Not the break room’s swill. There’s a decent café nearby.”

“I could use a cup,” Eileen said. Alastor stood and offered his arm to hers. Eileen accepted it, ignoring the continued stares around them.

#

When Lily stepped through the floo, Sirius had been finishing up the last bit of homework for the holiday break. He greeted her with a hug and led her to the nursery.

Before entering the room, he cast a bubblehead charm on himself to prevent the more toxic smells from attacking him and sending him rushing to the nearest bathroom to vomit.

“Severus is a worrywart.”

“I can believe that,” she said, following him inside. Lily grinned at the sight of the room that would be her goddaughter’s home.

The walls were a soft, light green. The carpet was powder blue. The curtains of the drape were white, plaited, and simple. The window was open to air the room out, but a heating charm kept most of the winter chill out. Boxes of toys were piled along one wall as high as the ceiling.

In the center of the room, Severus and Regulus looked rather irate as they more wrestled than built a bassinet. Sirius arched a brow at them.

“Did you try a spell?” Sirius asked.

“Yes,” Regulus said, climbing to his feet to embrace Lily. Severus stayed on the floor, gnashing his teeth at the pegs. “And I think this thing’s spell proofed. It wouldn’t fit in right. Anywhere.”

“We had Twinkle and Tippy bring books from the library so we could try again,” Severus growled. “Still nothing. In the end, I think we’re just going to transfigure a cardboard box into a bassinet, Siri.”

“I don’t think your mother would appreciate that,” Lily said.

Sirius agreed. “It’s a rather expensive bassinet.”

“Then you and Mum bought something completely overpriced that’s going to serve better as kindling for the fireplace,” Severus snarled. He crawled around, searching for something that might already be lost in the carpeting.

“Tell me you didn’t go to IKEA,” Lily asked.

“I’m wondering that, too,” Severus said. “Yet the directions are in English.”

“We got it at a toy store,” Sirius insisted.

“Maybe you two should take a break,” Lily suggested. Regulus rested his chin on her shoulder, already a little calmer. “It’s not going anywhere and Casey won’t be born for a while. The bassinet can wait.”

Severus stopped crawling around and glared at her. She arched a brow at him and he sighed. “Fine. But I’m not touching that monstrosity for at least twenty four hours! “

“That’s the spirit,” Lily said. Severus climbed back to his feet and stretched. “Because we got something more important to discuss.”

“Oh?”

“Yeah,” Lily said. “You’re wedding.”

Chapter 22

Severus massaged his neck.

“Right,” he said. “The wedding. Too bad we can’t just elope, right Siri?”

“It’s more for Eileen’s sake than anything at this point, I think,” Sirius agreed, removing the bubble around his face. “I’d be all right with eloping rather than having a bigger event once everything’s calmed down a bit and when I’m not pregnant.”

“Aw...” Lily cooed. “Little Casey as a flower girl would be the cutest thing ever!”

“Or ring bearer,” Regulus said. “We still don’t know what Casey’s sex is for sure yet. Right?”

He and Lily stared at Sirius, who sighed.

“No. We don’t know for sure, yet.”

“Not for another month or month and a half,” Severus added.

“Well, either way, it’d be cute to see,” Lily said.

“Maybe for your wedding, then,” Sirius said. “I’m sure Casey would like to be a flower girl for that.”

“Or ring bearer.”

“Can we call that something else?” Severus asked. “Every time you say ‘ring bearer’ I start thinking of *The Lord of the Rings*.”

Lily and Severus high-fived, grinning, while the Black brothers stared at them with thinly veiled confusion.

“Don’t worry, sweetie,” Lily said, hugging Regulus. “All the muggle culture references will make sense soon enough.”

“I’m sure it will,” Regulus said, sighing. “But all jokes aside, perhaps we should just focus on what we can do. Especially if it means getting away from that damn bassinet.”

“Fine, but talking about weddings is stress inducing,” Severus said.

“Says the groom,” Lily said.

“Well, he’s not wrong,” Sirius said. “The idea of having a wedding is stressful.”

“Says the other groom,” Regulus said, smirking. Lily smacked his shoulder lightly.

“Be nice.”

“But you just said something remarkably similar!”

“All right, I’ll have one of the elves bring us hot chocolate in the library,” Severus said.

“Just no Turkish delight,” Lily interjected before he could call one of the elves.

Severus glared at her. “Lee, why?”

“Too many literary references?”

“Maybe just a bit,” he said before calling for Tippy.

Once he gave her his request, the elf vanished and they walked together toward the library in silence. Once there, Lily set her bag on the table. Magazines and books spilled out onto surface.

“The Muggle world is still very anti-gay, unfortunately,” she said. “So I looked for anything more suited to table settings there.

“Most of my research was spent at book shops in Diagon and also wizarding Paris that had a better selection for planning same-sex weddings. But the overall themes don’t change. Now, I’ve looked through all of these myself and I’ve got a few questions for you two.”

Tippy apparated in with a tray before Lily could begin her interrogation.

“Hot Chocolate, Master Severus, as you requested for you and the Masters Sirius and Regulus and Miss Lily.”

“Thanks, Tip,” they chorused, relieving her of the mugs.

“Is that all, Master Severus?”

“For now, Tippy. Thank you.”

“All right, Master Severus,” she hugged the tray to her chest and apparated away.

Once it was just the four of them, Lily pulled out two sheets of parchment. One had a series of questions written on it and the other was blank.

“To start, we know that it has to take place after Severus turns seventeen, but is there a specific date in mind?”

“Erm...no,” Sirius said. “Though I think we’d rather not have it on the fourteenth of February.”

“Not on Valentine’s day, so...that is...Severus, you’re birthday’s the tenth of January?”

“The ninth,” Severus corrected. “So...that’s...” he furrowed his brow. “Forty days,”

“Make it thirty,” Sirius said. “Any time between the fourteenth of January to the ninth of February. That way, it’s got its own separate day in between your birthday and Valentine’s Day.”

Lily made note of that on the parchment. “We’ll think about that a bit more,” she said.

“Don’t you have a January birthday?” Severus asked.

“The thirtieth,” she said.

“That’s out,” Sirius said.

“So is February first and second,” Severus said.

Lily frowned.

“Candlemas,” he said.

She hummed in understanding and made another note.

“So, the date can be between January fourteenth to twenty-ninth, and February third to ninth.”

“Yeah, that sounds good.”

“Sooner you two decide on a date, the sooner we can send out announcements,” she said. “And as far as theme...keep it traditional?”

“Yeah, I think that’d be safest,” Severus said.

“February sixth,” Sirius said. They looked at him. “Well...June’s the traditional date for marriage and many prefer to have it on the date June second, which is the Festival of Juno. Well, the date for that is six-two, so I thought why not reverse it to two-six.”

Lily turned to Severus.

“Works for me,” he said.

“Save the date for February sixth, then,” she said, making note of that. “Anything else to go over?”

Sirius nodded. “I’d not mind a little color,” he said, “Though not our house colors. That could incite more complications than we need.”

“Gold’s okay,” Severus said. “And silver compliments it well.”

“Yes, but those are both rather muted.”

“But regal,” Lily said. “You can also add like a royal blue or dark purple if you want to keep the regal feel.”

“Blue would be a little too Ravenclaw,” Severus said. “But I’m not sure how I feel about purple.”

“It doesn’t have any house affiliation,” Sirius pointed out.

“True.”

“How about purple as a trim type color?” Lily suggested. “Enough to notice, but not so much that it takes over the other colors, but helps accent them.”

“Yeah, that’s fine,” Severus said.

“Good!” she scratched the notes onto the parchment. “Now, how about...the kind of traditional. Are we thinking more of a hand-fasting or –”

“Hand-fasting,” Sirius and Severus interrupted before she could make another suggestion.

“Hand-fasting is one of the more traditional type of wedding ceremony in the wizarding world,” Sirius said. “I might hate my parents’ ideas of tradition, but hand-fasting ceremonies are actually very beautiful.”

“Would we have to jump over a broom?” Severus asked.

Lily snorted. “What?” she asked.

“A ceremonial one,” Sirius said. “It won’t fly, so you don’t have to worry about tripping.”

“It’s still one of the weirder traditions. You’re certain your family will expect that?”

“Yes,” Sirius said.

Regulus nodded his head violently.

“Sev, you’re not getting out of jumping the broom,” he said. “It’s as much a part of the ceremony as the rope and the candles.”

Lily set her quill down and stretched her arms over head.

“Okay, given we’re going as traditional as possible with the wedding in wizarding standards, is there a specific god and goddess pairing you two feel close to?” She reached for one of the books. “I read that certain traditions call on specific gods and goddesses, particularly in ceremonies like this...”

“Well, given we’re not actually a heterosexual couple, I’m not sure we’ll find a pair that counts,” Severus said. “But...erm...*Accio Panthea Encycolopedia*.”

A book flew from the shelf and landed on the table.

“We could find something in here. Several famous deities are actually bisexual.”

Lily’s eyes lit up. “Achilles,” she said.

The boys looked at her.

“It’s mostly hinted at, but after Patroclus was killed in the Trojan War, he went on a rampage. Many believe this is because Achilles and Patroclus were lovers.”

“Apollo is also a popular queer deity,” Sirius added, “And Dionysus and Adonis. But we should also look outside of the Greek Pantheon.”

They searched for near an hour before deciding that the more positive representations were almost completely limited to the Greek Pantheon.

With that, they opted to invoke Achilles and Patroclus and agreed that a break was needed.

Severus called for Tippy to request a lunch in the small dining room downstairs.

Agreeing on soup and warm bread, Tippy bowed and went to prepare the meal, allowing them time to clear the table and head downstairs.

Sirius was glad for the reprieve to talk about things deemed more fun than discussing a wedding that barely had much time for planning.

He stroked his belly absentmindedly, following the curve of its swell where Casey grew.

“All right, Siri?” Lily asked.

“For the most part,” he said.

He didn’t feel completely all right, but he couldn’t put a name to it.

Something felt off, but what?

Whatever it was, it made him uneasy.

Casey squirmed around inside his belly, as though she sensed it, too. He rubbed his stomach, trying to soothe her.

“Are you sure?” Lily asked.

“Well, no. Not entirely. I can’t put my finger on it...”

“Do you want to go to St. Mungo’s?” Severus asked. It sounded like a question, but Sirius figured that even if he said no, Severus might press the issue.

“I don’t think it’s medical,” he assured him. “Just a feeling...but...”

Regulus went to the window, peering outside. “I don’t see anything,” he said. “It could be your parental instincts going a little haywire.”

Sirius looked around. The house was large. He could pinpoint several places that could, likely, be a hazard for a child. Sharp corners, high places, objects that could fall...

“It could be that,” he agreed. “But I’ve not even finished the first trimester, yet. I’m close, but not that close.” Regulus shrugged.

“It’s only one option. Not the only one.”

“You might be feeling that instinct sooner, though,” Lily said. “Or is that not possible?”

“Oh, it’s possible,” he said. “Unlikely, but certainly possible.”

“We’ll ask Mom what she thinks,” Severus said, “But I think there’s really nothing to worry about.”

Sirius could agree with that, but even through lunch, the feeling didn’t leave.

He wondered if he should go to St. Mungo’s then.

Or if it were something far worse.

#

It snowed heavily on New Years Eve.

In the corner, Eileen and Lily poured over the plans for the wedding – The haste of it sometimes overwhelmed Severus. Even so, he also felt excited – and Regulus played chess with Moody by the fireplace.

Severus pressed his ear to Sirius’ belly, waiting to feel something.

A kick, maybe.

Or perhaps hearing a heartbeat.

Would he be able to hear a heartbeat?

He didn’t know, but maybe...

“You’re awfully quiet,” Sirius said, running his fingers in Severus’ hair.

Severus had allowed him to style it himself and Sirius joked that he ought to let him do it all the time so it would never look like it was unwashed ever again, nor feel it, either.

Severus had called him an ass, reminding him that his hair was untamable and ridiculous otherwise. Somehow, though, Sirius managed to make it work.

It shined and remained sleek without being overdone. Perhaps he ought to let Sirius take over. Or ask him how he managed it.

He wasn't going to ask in the presence of others, though, even if one of them was his mother.

Scratch that.

Especially if one of them was his mother.

"Hush," Severus said. "I'm trying to hear her heart."

"I don't know if that's possible," Sirius laughed. "And if it is, would I even be far enough along?"

"Don't know, but I'm determined. If I can't hear her, then maybe she'll start kicking."

"Hasn't yet," Sirius said.

He waved his wand, summoning the books and pamphlets Pomfrey had given them. He leafed through them until he found the information he was looking for.

"You likely won't be able to feel her move around for another two months until you'll be able to feel it."

He showed Severus the evidence:

18 weeks: If you haven't felt your baby move yet, you probably will in the next few weeks. It'll take a couple of weeks longer for other people to feel your baby's movements from the outside.

Severus glared at the pamphlet, as though it had given him a very ill mannered, insulting joke.

Sirius laughed. "You look like you ate a lemon."

"Trust me, a lemon would be sweeter," Severus growled. Sirius laughed again, likely as Severus was acting a little more dramatic than necessary.

"It's not much longer, love," Sirius assured him. "Just be a little more patient."

"Not like I've a choice but to be," Severus said with a deep sigh. He moved up, kissing Sirius. "Are you still feeling uneasy?"

"Hm? A bit. I can't put my finger on it, though. I don't think it's instincts or physical issues. Maybe it's something to do with Casey's...own powers. I mean, a cousin of mine had a daughter who developed metamorphmagus powers and she had that power during her own pregnancy."

"Metamorphmagus? Damn! That's a cool power."

"Yep."

"So you think it might be that?"

“I don’t know for sure and likely won’t till we see until a little while longer, I think,” Sirius said.

“Maybe we should go in to St. Mungo’s then, anyway,” Severus said. “It wouldn’t hurt to have a check up and if there’s any specialty type powers that Casey could be developing.”

Sirius grew silent. “And if it’s not?”

“Whatever it is that’s bothering you, we’ll figure it out,” Severus promised.

He wished he could do more to reassure him, but he supposed he was doing all he could already.

“All right,” Sirius said. “I guess we’ll do that.” Severus kissed his cheek and cast a tempus charm.

Only an hour left till 1977.

Severus grinned and summoned the noise-crackers.

“Severus Prince!” Eileen snapped. “What are those doing in my house?”

“We won’t set them off *in* the house, Mum,” Severus snapped back. “Merlin’s pants, keep your hair on.”

“I have to agree with Sev,” Lily said, grinning. “It’s not New Years without explosives.”

“We’ll go up to the roof to set them off, Mum,” Severus assured her.

Eileen eyed the fireworks, sparklers, and noise crackers suspiciously.

“Fine,” she conceded. “But if anything gets set afire...”

“It’s snowing out!”

“*IF* anything gets set afire...”

Severus sighed. “I’ll put it out.”

“Thank you.”

He exchanged a look with Lily, as though they were exchanging similar thoughts. It was sometimes unnerving how similar they were.

As though they could be siblings.

But they couldn’t be.

Could they?

Sirius shook the thought from his head.

Severus and Lily had a few personality type similarities, but that could really just be a part of their astrological makeup, as they were born only a couple weeks apart from each other.

They were like twins, but *not* twins.

And Lily was a Gryffindor to the bone. She was the fiercest witch Sirius had ever met, next to Eileen.

A few minutes passed in tense silence. Then Lily stood and declared she was going to head to the roof. Severus followed, declaring that he didn't trust her alone with the fireworks.

Sirius watched them vanish, only to be drawn away from the door Lily and Severus went through by Eileen's touch against his shoulder.

"Sirius, is everything all right?"

"I think so," he said. He smiled at her in a way he hoped was reassuring. "Sev and I might head over to St. Mungo's to be certain, but for now, I'm fine."

Eileen seemed less convinced than he'd like her to be, but Sirius accepted it.

He can accept that his mother-in-law-to-be would be a worrywart and there would be nothing he could do about that save to live with it.

"If you're sure," she said carefully. Sirius nodded, smiling. "Well, don't hesitate if you need to talk or need some help managing all this. Unnecessary stress isn't good for you right now, Siri."

"I know, Eileen. Thanks."

Regulus raced by them – likely for the roof to help set up some of the fireworks. Sirius embraced Eileen and went after him.

He wasn't going to miss setting off some explosives himself. Sirius stepped outside and pulled his cloak around him tighter as the wind whipped around him.

Severus was casting charms on the fireworks to keep them dry and ready for setting off.

Lily was setting off some noise crackers, shrieking jubilantly as Regulus caught her around the waist and spun her around.

"Careful!" Severus shouted at them when they got too close to the edge. "I'd rather not be forced to cast a spell to prevent you two from killing yourselves if it can be helped."

"We weren't going to fall!"

"You got too close for my comfort."

"And mine," Lily added. "It was fun, till then."

Regulus frowned, chastised. "Sorry, Love."

"No one's hurt," she said. "So I'm not mad. Just a bit shaken. Give me a mo..."

Sirius shivered, jumping from foot to foot to keep blood flowing. "Is it midnight, yet?" he asked. "Sooner we set them off, sooner we go inside."

Severus laughed and sent a warming charm his way. The heat wasn't too hot, but nor was it lukewarm. It felt more like being wrapped in a warm blanket rather than a cloak.

"Better?"

"Much." Sirius went over to him and kissed him. "Thanks, Sev."

"One minute to midnight!" Lily shouted.

The tempus charm she cast was counting seconds to 1977.

“Everyone get behind a firework to set it off!”

She and Regulus knelt before the left two fireworks. Sirius knelt at the one vacant by Regulus and Severus knelt at his right. They lit a small flame at the tip of their wands and watched the seconds move.

“Ten,” Lily began.

Sirius blinked.

“Nine,” Regulus and Severus joined in.

He was seeing something that he couldn’t be certain was there...

“Eight.”

It looked like a skull...

“Seven.”

A snake slid from its mouth...

“Six.”

The snake’s jaws snapped...

“Five.”

He saw a flash of green...

“Four.”

Green eyes...

“Three.”

Black hair...

“Two.”

A lightening bolt scar...

“One!”

Casey, help me!

POP!

CRACK!

BOOM!

“Sirius?”

“Sirius, are you okay?”

“Siri?”

He gasped.

His firework had yet to go off.

“We need to go to St. Mungo’s,” he said. “We need to go *now*.”

Chapter 23

Severus paced the hallway while waiting for the healer to finish her examination.

He fumed at being dismissed from the room. Pomfrey never had him wait outside when Sirius had an exam with her.

It'd been like that for the last hour and his legs cramped, but he dared not sit down despite his mother's and Lily's insistences that he rest.

Regulus was just as restless as he was, but his anxiety manifested as a tapping heel. It grated Severus, but he knew it wasn't Regulus' fault.

Anything could set him off at the moment.

The door opened and Severus approached the healer.

"Well?"

She gave him a look that rivaled McGonagall's in terms of unimpressed. He met it unwaveringly. This woman wasn't McGonagall, after all, so she wasn't nearly as frightening.

"You can go in now," she told him.

He pushed past her into the room.

Regulus and Lily followed right behind him, despite Eileen's insistence that they let Sirius rest.

Sirius grinned as they approached.

"Why so grim?" he asked Severus.

"You decided you needed to go to the hospital. How am I not supposed to worry?"

"It's not as bad as I thought it was," Sirius said, looking to each of them in turn. "Casey's got a special power, like my little cousin Dora does."

Severus sighed, allowing the tension to flow away.

"A...a power?" Lily asked, eyes wide.

She sat in one of the chairs, as though the idea overwhelmed her.

"She's a type of seer," Sirius said, grinning brightly. "Not the gift of prophecy like some seers have and are more well known for, but what she gets is more like...premonitions of possible future events. The baby's as healthy as can be."

"When a baby has a special power, does it usually show this early?" Severus asked.

"The healer said that it's usually between ten to fifteen weeks for specific abilities to be shown, like seeing and metamorphing. Sometimes there are babies who are natural legilimens, too. Then there are certain family lines that have specific hereditary skill that every descendant has, like the descendants of Salazar Slytherin who all speak Parseltongue."

“But neither of us are seers. How could our child have that power?”

“It’s usually a...recessive trait that can pass down to the child, so we both have to be carriers of it, but it doesn’t show for us because at least one of our parents *weren’t* a carrier, but it’s likely we both have an ancestor of sorts who has the gift of sight.”

“So it’s not much different from physical genetic markers, like hair and eye color,” Lily said.

Sirius nodded. “Exactly like that.”

Regulus scratched his chin.

“Too bad we’re all but disinherited,” he said. “Think our parents would bother telling us which of our *glorious* ancestors would have the power of sight?”

“They might if I wanted to tell them that Casey has a special power unique just to her,” Sirius said. “Not that I want them near us, Reg.”

“I know, but a letter isn’t much. And it’s not like they don’t know where to find us, even if they are stupidly stubborn bastards.”

Severus turned to Eileen.

“It’d be through your line, Mum,” he said. “Wouldn’t it?”

“Yes,” she agreed. “I’ll have to check our records, but we do have a family tree mapped *somewhere*. We can look for it when we return to the manor.” She shifted her gaze to Sirius. “Do they want to keep you here long?”

“I think they need a few more things from me, but I’m of age. I can discharge myself and get home safely enough,” he assured her.

“I’ll stay,” Severus said.

“Sev, I’m all right. You don’t need to stay.”

“I know, but I don’t...It doesn’t feel right going home right now.”

Sirius stared at him, as though he thought Severus was being silly, but relaxed, and conceded.

“All right,” he said.

Lily, Regulus, and Eileen bade them goodnight with promises to check in on them later in the day and left. After the door shut, Sirius moved to let Severus join him.

“You’re still tense,” Sirius said, rubbing Severus’ back. “Anything I can help with?”

“Maybe. You had a premonition?”

“I did.”

“What did you see?” Severus asked.

Sirius frowned, thinking how best to describe it.

“Do you remember what you saw?”

“I do, but I don’t know how to describe it,” he said. “I saw a lot of green. Like a tint of green. I saw a human skull and a large snake, like a python or something. The last thing was something I heard: a little kid screaming for Casey.”

“A kid?”

“Too young to really determine gender,” Sirius said. “But yes. The kid screamed ‘Casey, help me.’”

Severus took hold of Sirius hand, gently running finger pads over skin.

“I don’t know if that kid was a younger sibling or a cousin or...well...you get the idea. All I get is that they were in trouble.”

“But Casey hasn’t been born yet.”

“It’s a premonition. It’s likely that this kid hasn’t been conceived yet.”

Severus looked up from their joined hands. “Siri...what if it has to do with Voldemort?”

The thought sent a chill down Sirius’ back.

“I don’t even want to think about it, if that’s the case. Casey’s not here yet. I don’t want to think that Voldemort might come after us. And why would he want to?”

“You’re family’s likely going to support him as much as mine opposes him. I don’t...”

“You’re not joining them for Dumbledore.”

“I won’t,” Severus said. “Still, I don’t like the idea of having a dark wizard running around and spreading fear wherever he goes.”

Sirius hummed. He kissed Severus.

“I don’t expect you to protect me *and* the baby. We’re going to protect her together, and we’ll protect each other. I’m pregnant, not infirmed. As for Voldemort, well, unless he becomes a real risk to us and our family, I don’t want to worry about it more than necessary.”

Outside, London had gathered to ring in the New Year.

They could hear the explosions setting off in the street.

Sirius nuzzled against Severus, ignoring the fireworks and shouting outside, as well as the memory of the child’s plea to Casey.

#

If Sirius had more premonitions, he did not tell Severus.

They made a stop at Madam Malkins’ to get Sirius’ school robes adjusted as from here on they’d start stretching against his growing stomach.

He stopped Sirius from slapping the witch’s hand away when she reached to feel without asking.

“We’re in a bit of a hurry,” Severus said, over conscious of the throbbing vein starting to pop in Sirius’ forehead. “So if it can be done quickly, I think that’d be best.”

“Of course,” she said, ignoring Sirius’ ire as though she didn’t even notice it. “It’ll only take a moment.”

She went to get extra fabric and Severus released Sirius’ hand.

“I know it bothers you that people want to touch your belly, Siri, but it’s not that bad.”

“I know, but the least they can do is *ask* first. It’s still *my* stomach they want to touch.”

Severus rubbed his back. “I’m allowed, though, right?”

“That’s different,” Sirius muttered, crossing his arms over his chest.

And perhaps it was, but Severus couldn’t blame Sirius for getting more agitated by well wishers wanting to see if they could feel Casey move. They didn’t mean any harm, true, but it’d be courteous to ask.

Severus stepped away from Sirius as the witch returned.

The band of measuring tape flitted around Sirius, taking measurements for the robes as they were cut and sewn together magically. Madam Malkins checked each one after to ensure that they fit.

Satisfied, she rang up the charges and received her payment. With the robes safely bundled in boxes and parcels, Sirius and Severus left to restock quills, ink, and parchment.

Sirius hugged the parcels to him, as though trying to hide or shield his stomach.

Severus wished there was something he could say that would reassure him that he was fine. The baby wasn’t even that big yet and likely wouldn’t be for some months.

Still the physical changes were starting to bother him more and more.

“Are you sure you don’t want me to carry some of it?” he asked.

“No,” Sirius said. He hugged the parcels closer. “I’ve got it.”

Well, if it made him feel better.

“Let me know if you change your mind.”

“I will,” Sirius promised.

Severus opened the door to Flourish and Blotts holding it open for him.

“Oof,” he grunted. Sirius sat down as soon as he could, cheeks flushed and brow furrowed. “Ugh, I’m fat.”

“You’re not fat,” Severus snapped, frowning at him. “You’re pregnant. There’s a difference.”

“Well, once the baby’s born, I might be fatter than I was before.”

Severus sighed. It wasn’t likely that Sirius was going to listen to him right now, so he went searching for the parchment and quills they’d both need for school.

He grabbed enough for both and went to purchase them. A glance at Sirius relaxed him as he made his way through the line.

Sirius seemed to be more relaxed than he was before, which was good. Sirius met his gaze and grinned. Severus took that as a sign meaning that Sirius was feeling a little better.

He returned the smile with a more reserved one of his own before making his way up the line to make the purchase.

Sirius stood as Severus returned and they headed back out into the cold.

Severus shuddered at the sharpness of the wind whipping around. Sirius pulled his cloak's hood over his head and tightened the string until all that could be seen were his eyes and nose.

"Ugh, it's going to snow again," he grumbled.

"We should hurry to the Leaky, then," Severus said as they ventured back out into the elements. "Get a cup of hot chocolate, and then go home."

Sirius hummed his agreement, likely more interested in the idea of going home and taking a nap. Admittedly a nap sounded excellent.

Who knew how long it'd be till he and Sirius would have a proper night of sleep after Casey was born after all?

Better to grab as much sleep as he could now – more so while they could nap whenever they wanted to without having to worry about homework and classes.

Sirius went to get a table for them as Severus ordered two mugs of cocoa. He joined Sirius at the table afterward, kissing him before sitting down.

"Are you hungry? I could go back..."

"I'm good," Sirius assured him, "And so is she."

"She?"

They turned to the speaker.

The woman was tall, voluptuous, and blonde. She eyed them over jeweled spectacles as she joined them, uninvited, at their table.

"Are we talking about the baby now?"

"Erm..."

"Rita Skeeter," she said, holding her hand out to them. "Of the *Daily Prophet*."

Neither of them moved to accept the outstretched hand. She pulled back after a few minutes.

"Well, Gentlemen, after the last time I saw you, I figured if I were to get any more information about your romance, the best way would be to ask directly. Have you anything to say for our readers?"

Sirius fumed. "Yeah: fuck off."

"But you are certain that you're having a daughter," she said. "Otherwise why refer to the baby in the feminine pronoun? Come on, Sirius. Just a little nibble is all I ask. Maybe the baby's name? Is she showing any special powers like your little cousin?"

Sirius remained resiliently silent.

“How are your parents handling having a grandchild so soon?”

Still, Sirius said nothing.

They took their cocoa, thanking the waitress, who eyed Skeeter nervously, and continued to ignore her.

“All right, if you don’t want to talk about the baby, how about your upcoming wedding? What date are we supposed to save?”

“We aren’t giving any interviews,” Severus said. “And why the fuck would we want to talk to you? You can insult me all you want, but you also went after my mother. Many people judge her for what she did without even knowing the whole story.”

“Then why not tell it?” she said. “If your mother is such a tragic hero, then her story should be told.”

Severus leaned back in his seat. “It’s not my story to tell.”

“Well, we’ll see if your mother will meet with me without trying to hex me.” She stood and reached into her pocket. She slid a card to them. “If you change your mind, boys.”

She winked at them and walked away.

“You probably shouldn’t have said anything to her,” Sirius said.

“Probably not, but it got her to go away. And if she does decide to sniff around my mom, then I hope she gets hexed,” Severus said.

He leaned back in his seat and finished his cocoa.

“Ready to go home?”

“Yes.”

They stood, gathering their new parcels.

“I can’t decide what sounds better: a bath or a nap.”

“Why are you asking me?” Severus asked. “You may as well ask which is better: a burger or a pizza.”

“Great, now I want a pizza.”

“At least we can agree on that.”

#

Lily gripped the sheets and bit her lower lip.

Even with the silencing charms up, she felt a need to keep her voice down.

Regulus didn’t seem to mind, taking his time while he could, tongue swirling and flicking around her sex, drinking from her where he could.

“Fuck,” Lily gasped. “*Oh, fuck!*”

Regulus hummed, feeling her muscles contract as she came and her voice choke off.

His cock pressed uncomfortably against the sheets and slickness dripped down his own thighs. He wanted to come, but he also wanted to keep Lily pliant and sated.

He pressed two fingers inside her, feeling how warm and tight she was.

She tightened around his fingers and he licked her again. Lily gasped and whimpered, clenching around his fingers again.

He curled his fingers, searching...it couldn't be harder than finding his own g-spot...

A few strokes and she came again.

Regulus at last let off and prowled over her, running his hand through deep red hair as he pushed inside her. He kissed her as he thrust, pushing both of them over the edge.

Sweat, saliva, and sex fluids drenched them both as they reluctantly detangled.

“We should get up,” Lily said.

“Fuck that,” Regulus replied.

Lily hummed, turning over to lay her head on his shoulder. His heart pounded against his chest and one hand stroked her hair weakly.

He didn't want to go back to school. It'd not be as big an annoyance if they were in the same House.

He never thought himself anything close to a Gryffindor, but if it were possible to switch houses, he would: especially if it meant holding onto Lily.

He played with her hair, deep in thought. He couldn't be angry at James, really. Lily was...

She was indescribable, sometimes...

Almost mythical, like an Amazon Queen, or a warrior goddess.

Right now, she seemed more a princess as she slept, curled beside him and content.

Regulus held her closer, kissing her forehead. Lily hummed as he pressed his lips to her eyelids, nose, cheeks, lips...

Lily opened her mouth, allowing the kiss to deepen. Regulus accepted greedily.

Snakes and lions never mix, he thought.

Regulus recalled the Ancient Egyptian tales of the lion-cat Goddess Bast (or Sekhmet), who would guard her father, the sun God Ra, from a serpent demon named Apep.

We're not really a snake and a lioness, he reminded himself. *It's just a metaphor.*

But a metaphor often taken too seriously and too literally by far too many people.

Regulus pushed the doubts down, deciding he'd rather just focus on the taste of Lily's mouth.

The train whistle blew as they finished shoving trunks under their seats.

Once done, Lily went to dress in her uniform, allowing the three boys to themselves for a few minutes.

Severus nearly collapsed beside Sirius and slouched, stretching.

“Damn, those trunks are heavy.”

“You didn’t have to *lift* them,” Sirius pointed out.

Severus shrugged, as if to say it never hurt to use a little manual labor here and there. Regulus took the opposite seat, legs crossed.

“Might I ask you two something?” he asked.

“Sure,” Sirius said, resting a hand on his rounding belly.

Regulus swallowed, glancing at the sliding door, then turned back to them.

“Do you think I’m...good enough for Lily?”

“Damn near more than Potter,” Severus said.

Sirius scratched his chin. “I’d rather stay out of that,” he admitted. “But I think that’s for Lily to decide more than us. So long as she thinks you’re good enough, then you’re good enough. I get it, though. Lily’s a unique sort of witch.”

“Why?” Severus asked.

“Just...house rivalry sort of shit,” Regulus admitted. “Her being a Gryffindor and with me being a Slytherin. It might just be stupid.”

“It is,” Sirius said. “We made it work. Don’t see why you and Lily won’t be able to.”

“You almost didn’t.”

“You’re a lot smarter than Sirius,” Severus said. “And Lily’s a different sort of Gryffindor than what we usually see. Sometimes I wonder why she’s in Gryffindor. So much of her is Hufflepuff.”

“Really?” Sirius asked. “I sometimes think she should’ve been sorted to Ravenclaw.”

“She’s too hyper to be in Ravenclaw.”

“She’s too serious to be in Hufflepuff.”

“That might be why she’s in Gryffindor, then.”

“Wouldn’t a mix of a Hufflepuff and a Ravenclaw be more a Slytherin?”

“No, not really,” Severus said. “Especially given how Slytherins are about blood status and shit.”

“Oh, yeah,” Sirius mumbled. “That. Fucking Salazar Slytherin.”

“Hey, I’m a Slytherin and I’m a half-blood.”

“You know what I mean.”

Regulus watched them debate.

He couldn't say if it was more cute or strange, but it was...something in between.

Either way, it didn't help. He wanted to avoid discussing it with Lily, but it might be his only option. At the same time, he was afraid of the answer she might give him.

Lily entered as the debate over which combination would end up in which house was reaching its peak.

She watched, brows arched, as they considered whether a Ravenclaw and a Gryffindor combination would be better off in Slytherin.

They'd already agreed that a Gryffindor would do just fine in Hufflepuff regardless of any other qualities that matched a different house.

“Dare I ask?”

“I might've set something off,” Regulus said.

“But it's the arrogance of Gryffindors mixed with the wits of Ravenclaws that makes Slytherins.”

“I agree on the wit, but do we have to say arrogance?”

“Do you deny it?”

Regulus clicked his tongue. “I'm not entirely sure how, though, but I did.”

#

He was acutely aware of eyes on him.

He tried to hide his stomach from view as best he could as he went from class to class.

Sirius was glad he at least wasn't getting so sick anymore.

He still had morning sickness here and there, but it had been less frequent. Still, he had come to prefer vomiting everything he ate compared to being stared at.

No thanks to Skeeter, everyone in school knew he was pregnant. Most, thankfully, wanted to give him congratulations, but there were a few cracking slut jokes.

As if!

Idiots.

How does one be a slut when they've only been with one person? Only loved one person?

You don't.

Lily had a few choice words about the cruelty of those jokes and the people spreading them.

James and Remus were just as upset by how it was revealed as Sirius had been. They weren't as mad as Eileen had been, but it was up there.

“It’s not like you need to react like this, Potter,” Severus told him one evening as they left their Astronomy class.

“That’s my goddaughter,” he complained. “I have every right to be mad.”

“I thought we just agreed on just who the godmother was going to be,” Severus mumbled.

“I think he named himself godfather.”

“Damn it.”

Then there were the premonitions.

Sometimes they were frightening.

Other times he could expect good things.

All in all, he made note of them, trying to make sense of them whenever they came.

The premonitions themselves weren’t frequent, but he always wrote down what he saw in a spare notebook. He didn’t know why, exactly, except that he felt that they might be important.

Sirius could handle them, but how was a little baby supposed to handle and understand such a power?

Sure, Dora was a metamorphmagus, but that sort of power could be fun to a little kid. Some of what he was seeing was more...

Terrifying.

And that *really* worried Sirius...

Casey, watch out!

Sirius woke, gasping. His stomach roiled, so he jumped out of bed and raced to the bathroom before chucking up dinner.

The bile made a clogged sound as it hit the water and smelled sour and rancid.

Sirius’ arms and legs shook even though he wasn’t doing anything. Flushing the toilet, he stood and went to rinse out his mouth and brush his teeth.

He turned to the door, hearing two soft raps against the wood.

“Come in,” he said, voice croaking.

Remus poked his head inside and his nose wrinkled.

“Morning sickness?”

“And a premonition,” he said.

“Need anything?”

“I don’t think so,” Sirius said, He shoved his toothbrush inside his mouth and brushed them hard.

“Should I let Severus know?”

Sirius spat and wiped his mouth with a towel. "I'll tell him," he said. "But right now, I need to get it written down before I forget it."

"Right," Remus said. They left the bathroom together. "So long as you're okay."

"I'm okay," he said. Physically, yes. He and the baby were fine. Emotionally, well...

He could tell it was getting to Severus and the others.

He couldn't help how he was doing emotionally. He couldn't help that he felt fat. He couldn't help that he hated having a larger chest than before.

And he certainly couldn't help how everyone else seemed to react to it now.

No matter how much he wanted to make them see him differently.

Chapter 24

“All right!” Lily said, taking a seat between Severus and Sirius at breakfast early one Tuesday morning. “Eileen just told me that everything’s a go. Announcements are out. The date is set. Dumbledore agreed to officiate. All that’s left is for you two to get your vows settled and to get your robes fitted. Oh! Sev! You’re seventeenth’s coming up. Since mine’s just a little later in the month, you want to have a double birthday?”

Severus shook his head. “No, Lily, I don’t. I don’t even want a party.”

“Why not? You’re turning seventeen. *We’re* turning seventeen.”

“And?” Severus pressed. “It’s a bit much, don’t you think? I have a birthday, then we have the wedding just a few days later?”

“It doesn’t have to be anything big,” Lily said. “Just a small splurge at the Broomsticks, annoy the other patrons with obnoxious birthday songs, a bit of cake and call it done.”

“It’ll be fun,” Sirius said. “It’s not like you hate birthdays.”

“No, I don’t,” Severus sighed. “Just the party element.”

Lily turned to Sirius, eyes wide and lower lip juttled out in a pout.

Sirius pulled out the two way notebook she had gotten them at the beginning of the year. Severus watched him, brow furrowed. Lily peered over Sirius’ shoulder, but he pushed her back.

“Sensitive info, Love,” he said. “Back off.”

“Fine, Jeez,” Lily said.

Severus retrieved his book, checked the note, and glared at Sirius.

“All right, we’ll have a party, but that’s low, Siri.”

“You say that now, but I know you’ll have fun, Sev,” Sirius said, grinning.

Severus shook his head and checked the time.

“Charms?”

“Yep.”

Severus stood and kissed Sirius then ruffled Lily’s hair, flipping it over her face.

“See you at lunch, Babe,” he said to Sirius.

As he walked away, Lily fixed her hair, running her fingers through the strands. “Arse. So, what did you tell him?”

“That is a private conversation between almost-married couples,” he said.

“Its sex related, isn’t it?” Lily said, smirking at him.

Sirius smirked back.

“What did you threaten him with?”

“Threaten? Me? I’d never! Besides, it wasn’t anything that I wasn’t going to do anyway on his birthday.”

“That is sly, Siri,” Lily laughed.

Sirius grinned. “Well, I’m one sly dog,” he replied.

Lily shook her head. “I never should’ve taught you what that meant.”

#

So much darkness...

So much pain...

From tombstone to tombstone...

Even the stars and the moon did not shine...

The only light came from spells being cast and the fires they left...

He ran...

Looking...

Looking...

He saw a child and picked up pace...

“Harry, hold on!”

“Avada Kedavra!”

Sirius screamed, bolting upright.

The curtains of his four poster bed ripped back. James and Remus held him down, trying to calm him. Slowly, Sirius regained his wits, though he still shook.

“Bad dream?” James asked.

“Or was it another premonition?” Remus said.

“Don’t...I don’t know,” Sirius said. He drew his sleeve over his forehead, mopping away cold sweat. “I hope to God it was a dream.”

He glanced at James, frowning. The boy he saw looked so much like him.

But the eyes were different.

Not just the color – he was too far to see the color, but he knew they weren’t brown. A brighter color. But there was also a maturity in them that James doesn’t have, but the look on that boy’s face...

Gods and Goddesses it wasn’t right seeing that look on James’ face, he thought.

Remus handed him a cup of water – transfigured from one of their trinkets lying around. Sirius sipped the water slowly, so not to upset his already fragile stomach.

“Is there a way I can stop myself from having premonitions?” he asked. “I don’t know how I’m going to handle two semesters of that...fuck, how am I going to handle it when the baby’s born?”

“You’re asking the wrong wizard,” Remus said.

“Sorry, mate,” James said. “Maybe you should ask Madam Pomfrey.”

“I think I will when I’ve a chance to,” he said.

“Well, it doesn’t seem that Casey’ll be the kind of seer that the Divination Teacher is,” Remus said. “That’s good. She might be more accurate in her predictions.”

James chuckled. “Think on it. One day when she can talk, she’ll come up to you and Sev and announce that she’s going to have a brother or sister before you’re even aware that you’re pregnant again.”

“Yeah, I can accept that. What bothers me is the darker things she’s seeing.” He looked at James. “And...um...I think that your kid’s connected, James.”

“I’m not a parent.”

“But one day you might be.”

“Well, one day, sure, but the only woman I *want* to have a child with hates me, so I don’t see how I’m going to have a kid at any point in my life,” James said.

“But what if you find someone else?” Sirius asked.

“There *is no one else!*” James shouted at him.

Remus and Sirius stared at him, stunned.

James sighed. “I’m sorry, guys. I’m trying, but it’s still...”

“Maybe you still feel that way now, but what about after we graduate?” Remus asked. “What about when you’re not around her as often as before? I don’t think she’s your soul mate, James. Not the way you think and it’s not...well...”

“I don’t know who the mother of this kid is, but I do know that he looks *exactly* like you, James,” Sirius said. “Same build as you. Same hair. Even down to the glasses. It was almost like looking at *you*. Except the eyes were different. Not just in color, but in the way he looked at me...and he had a scar on his forehead. It was kind of weird looking...a lightning bolt, I think...jagged...”

Sirius grabbed some parchment and a quill, quickly drawing what he saw.

James glanced at the mark. “That’s what you saw?”

“On his forehead,” Sirius restated.

“But...how?”

“Fuck if I know, but he’s showing up a lot in the worst premonitions I get. Or she gets. I don’t know.”

James took the sketch, staring at it, as though it meant something. Or should mean something. He shook his head and lowered the page.

“I’m not going to be a dad,” he said. “Even if I wanted to be a dad, I don’t think I could do it.”

Sirius finished the water and changed the goblet back into its usual state.

“It might just be a possible future,” he said. “I really hope that’s the case because I don’t know how to even *begin* protecting Casey from what I’m seeing.”

Remus stretched. “For now, just keep doing what you’re doing and you and Sev can come up with a plan for how to deal with it. Either way, Casey’ll be as stable as she can be. She might just think the worst ones are nightmares until she’s able to handle them as premonitions.”

Sirius massaged his forehead. “Perhaps,” he said. “But what do I tell her when she realizes that the nightmares are coming true?”

“By then, she’ll be old enough to understand her gifts,” Remus said.

James continued to mope in the corner, poking at the sketch Sirius made with his wand.

He would have thought that James would take the idea of being a parent happily, but he supposed that given how he felt about Lily and her relationship with Regulus, and that it seemed something was off about the boy...

“Prongs, I’ve been thinking about using a memory charm on you,” Remus said.

James and Sirius turned to him.

“I think if done properly with pinpoint focus, we might be able to help you forget how you feel for Lily. I’m still looking into it, but I think it’d help you.”

James scratched his cheek. “Yeah,” he said. “If you think it’ll help. Let me know when you’re ready to give it a shot. Better you than Sirius, anyway.”

“Hey,” Sirius laughed, “My spell work isn’t that bad.”

“I don’t trust you enough right now. What if you’re hormones go nuts while casting the spell? I could end up in St. Mungo’s Spell-Damage Ward for the rest of my life!”

Sirius glared at him. “Rude,” he grumbled.

“Play nice, you two,” Remus chuckled. “I’m sure Sirius would cast it just as well as I would when the time comes, but we’ll handle it when we’re all more confident about casting it on you.”

James nodded. “Fine. I’m going back to bed.”

He pulled the curtains hanging around his bed closed, blocking him from Sirius and Remus.

#

Lily laughed at the mug Severus had just unboxed – a gift from Regulus that read “World’s Okayest Dad.” He glared mockingly at Regulus, who looked rather proud of himself.

“Ass.”

“You love it.”

“I’m charming it to say ‘World’s Best Dad.’”

“Get in line,” Lily said. “There’s around two million other men who could be dads, at least half of that wanted to be dads, so…”

“Shut up, Lee.”

“Don’t worry, you may be in the top one thousand,” she said.

“Fuck that,” Sirius said. “He’s in the top five.”

Severus snorted, setting the mug down. “Thanks, Love.”

He pecked Sirius’ cheek as Lily opened her gift from Regulus.

The box was significantly smaller and thinner. Within was a silver chain with a rose quartz pendant. Lily thanked him and let him put it on her. The chain glimmered against her skin, shining in the dim light.

With that, Regulus went to get more butterbeer for them.

“Too bad we can’t get firewhiskey,” Lily said.

“Well, I’d get some,” Severus answered. “But I’m the only one who can drink it, what with you not quite being seventeen yet.”

“And the baby still growing.”

“Exactly.”

Sirius shrugged. “I can wait till she’s born,” he said. “Or should I wait till after she’s weaned?”

“I’d say wait till she’s done weaning,” Lily said. “Breast milk is better than formula…”

“Good point.”

Regulus set the mugs down and passed them around. “What’d I miss?”

“Just lamenting not being able to drink,” Severus said.

“You can.”

“Yeah, but only me,” Severus said. “Sirius is pregnant and Lily’s got another week and a half before she’s actually of age.”

Regulus hummed.

“It’d be boring drinking alone,” Severus continued. “And I’d rather *not* give anyone any more fodder than what’s already available. No. I don’t think it’d be a good idea getting drunk… especially if I’m the only one getting drunk.”

“Fine, but one day, I want to see that! I bet you and Sirius would be hilarious drunk.”

“Well, it’s gonna wait till Casey doesn’t need breast milk, we think.”

Regulus shuddered. "I don't need to know you're gonna breastfeed her, Siri. I don't want to think about your boobs." Lily punched his arm.

"Be nice to your brother."

"What's the point of being a little brother if you can't be mean to the older brother?" Regulus asked, pouting at her.

"I think it's less about that and more that anything could set me off," Sirius said, grinning. "It'd be odd if you were comfortable enough to talk about my boobs, so I'm not going to take it personally. Just wait till you get pregnant."

"Ugh. I think not."

"Hey now, if we get married, I refuse to be the only one getting pregnant," Lily said. "If you weren't able to, fine, I'd deal with it."

"How is that going to work?" Regulus asked her. "You don't have a penis."

The next table over, third year girls giggled at them. Regulus glared at them, unamused by their immaturity.

Lily kissed his cheek. "I'm sure we'll figure something out," she assured him. "But let's wait till we *are* married. No offense Siri."

"None taken," Sirius said.

Severus rubbed his back and leaned in to kiss his neck. Sirius shivered, trying to repress his growing arousal as Severus kissed the skin behind his ear.

"You know, we're going to be finding out Casey's sex soon," he stated.

"Yay!" Lily said, bouncing where she sat and grinning brightly. "Though, I guess we'll have to stop referring to her as 'she' if Casey ends up being male."

"Hopefully we won't have to," Sirius said.

He flinched a bit when Severus' hand slid beneath his shirt to run and gently scratch his skin.

"It'd be odd referring to Casey in the male pronoun instead of the female."

"You opted for a gender –neutral name just in case, right?"

"Yes, but we're really hoping for a girl."

"We can have a son later once things calm down," Severus added. "For now, we should focus on what's more important."

"The wedding?"

"That's the most immediate thing, I guess," Severus sighed. "But I was talking about school..."

They fell silent, remembering what was coming up.

Exams.

Sirius didn't think the others needed to worry about that as much as he did.

By the time exams came around, he'd also be getting ready to give birth to the baby.

He sort of hoped that she'd wait for his exams to be finished and over with, but somehow, Sirius felt that wouldn't happen.

It was wishful thinking, perhaps, but it was either that, or hope his water didn't break during an exam. Most likely, he'd give birth just before his exams, if he did the math right...the baby would be born in May.

Severus kissed his neck again. Sirius turned to kiss him back, pressing his lips on the corner of Severus' mouth. Lily cooed.

"You two are so cute! Big improvement since last year," she said. "I hate to brag, but I'm good at this matchmaking shit, aren't I?"

"Whatever you say, Lee," Severus replied.

"Why do people say 'I hate to brag' right before they're about to brag?" Regulus asked.

"Because we're proud of ourselves but we don't want to seem too proud," Lily said. "It's false humility."

"And yet you're indulging it?"

"I don't see why I shouldn't. I got them back together," she waved her hand at Severus and Sirius. "And now they're getting married and having a baby. All before Valentine's Day. If that doesn't make me good at this, then I don't know what would."

"Most of it was us, actually," Sirius pointed out.

"But was it not my directions and instructions you were listening to?"

Sirius chuckled. "Fine, you've a point." He leaned back, resting his hands on his belly. "Now, what else can we do today? Or would want to do today?"

Severus grinned at him.

"That we can do with others," Sirius clarified.

"Oh...erm..."

Lily laughed and Regulus scrunched his face up in disgust.

"I think we've done everything any of us are really willing to do," Regulus said. "Thing's just got weird."

"Aw, can't take the heat, Reggie?"

"Fuck you, Sev."

Severus arched a brow and smirked. Sirius smacked his arm.

"Drop it," he said. "I could use a nap anyway. Thank fuck it's Saturday."

“You know, with a baby on the way, you might want to find alternative swearwords,” Lily suggested. “Like fudge or darn it or...”

“The baby isn’t going to start talking until she’s around...what? Six months old or older? I think I’m fine until then.”

“It’ll be your butt, then, when Casey starts swearing up a storm at daycare,” Severus said.

“As if you can talk.”

“Okay. Maybe it’ll be both our butts, then. We do need to stop swearing so much. Sooner we break that habit, the less likely we’re going to slip up around the kid.”

“Swearing is so much fun, though.”

“I know,” Severus said.

Sirius stood, glad he wasn’t along far enough to require help in getting out of a chair. He was getting there, though.

He led the group out into the January chill, pulling his cloak tighter around him, though he still shivered. “Ugh, so cold, but it’s too warm inside.”

“Honeydukes?” Severus asked.

“Yeah, why not,” Sirius said.

They bade goodbye to Regulus and Lily before heading over to the candy shop. Inside the shop, Sirius went for the Cockroach Clusters, to Severus’ distaste, and grabbed two large boxes.

“Really, love? You hate those.”

“Normally, yes.”

“Well, there are worse cravings to get, I suppose,” Severus said with a sigh as he selected an assortment of sugar quills and chocolate frogs. Sirius also grabbed a box of Bertie Bott’s Every Flavor Beans, already munching on a cockroach.

Sirius took great pleasure in seeing Severus so disgusted. He actually gagged.

“I know its just enchanted peanuts and caramel and chocolate, but damn it, Sirius.”

Sirius swallowed. “Don’t hate. Besides, it’s not much different from a chocolate frog, if you think about it.” Severus snorted a laugh as they set their candies on the counter to be rung up.

“Yes, but chocolate frogs are like Easter bunnies. They look like frog shaped candy and occasionally have a nice filling. Cockroach Clusters look like real cockroaches.”

Sirius held up another whole cluster, examining it.

The antennas and legs wiggled as if trying to escape him. The shell was smooth peanut brittle with caramel and chocolate marks. Even the belly looked realistic. He shrugged and took a bite.

Severus shuddered.

“It’s not real,” he mumbled as Sirius handed the shop keeper payment. “It’s not real. It’s not real. It

looks real but it's not real.”

“You’re too fun to mess with, Love,” Sirius said after finishing his second cluster.

They took their bags and ventured back outside into Hogsmeade. Snowflakes drifted down from grey clouds. Sirius cast a warming charm on his cloak before they headed back to the castle.

Chapter 25

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

“How are you feeling, Mr. Black?” Madam Pomfrey asked after Sirius had settled on the bed she directed him to. Severus sat in a chair beside him.

“Excited,” he said.

“Well, then, let’s get the mundane things done first, then we’ll find out if your baby really will be a girl.”

Cassandra or Cassius, which will it be, Sirius thought, laying down.

Madam Pomfrey waved her wand over his stomach. A quill dictated notes for her as she spoke, noting weight, circumference, and stage.

Sirius resisted cringing at his new weight. It wasn’t like it could be helped that he’d gain weight. He had no reason to be self conscious.

And yet...

“So far, I’m impressed, Mr. Black,” she said. “Both you and Casey are as healthy as can be.”

Severus grinned, as if it were more his achievement than Sirius’. Sirius decided to let it go. It was his baby just as much, anyway. Let him be happy where he could.

“Now for the moment you’ve been waiting for over the last eighteen weeks.”

She waved her wand over Sirius’ stomach again.

The tip of the wand took on a soft blue.

“I want to remind you that this spell predates our modern concepts of color and gender association to where cooler colors were associated mostly with the female sex and warmer colors were associated with the male sex,” she said.

The tip continued to glow blue for another half minute before extinguishing.

Madam Pomfrey pocketed her wand.

“Congratulations, Mr. Black and Mr. Prince,” she said. “You’re having a daughter.”

After making a few further notes, she glanced at them, wondering at their silence. They grinned at her.

“You want to run around and scream, don’t you?”

“Yes,” Severus admitted.

“I know I can’t, but I really want to,” Sirius said.

“Well, you can scream but not in here. You do not want to do anything too strenuous, Mr. Black.

Your daughter will be quite fragile for some time still.”

“Oh!” Sirius said. “Madam, a couple questions: what is the effect on a child when the carrying parent is an animagus? We’d been meaning to ask about that.”

Madam Pomfrey stared at him, astonished.

“Oh? Well...most animagi mothers and carrying fathers have no issues when they change from one form to another, but it depends on the type of creature they turn into. For instance, if you change into something small, you’re safe during the embryonic stages, but after that, the baby needs room to grow.”

“I change into a Scottish Deerhound.”

She hummed. “I would not advise transformations past the second trimester. The only one changing is your, not the baby. But that is my own professional opinion. I would not be surprised to find studies on the subject, though, and encourage you to look into it more.”

“Got it,” Sirius said, trying to keep the disappointment out of his voice.

He can’t say he missed fleas, but he missed the freedom one got from being a dog.

He hoped he’d still be able to make the transformation. He and James had *hated* going around with a mandrake leaf under their tongues for a month.

Even remembering *that* made him shudder.

“Well, we’re done here, unless you have other questions.”

Sirius and Severus both shook their heads.

“We’ll let you know if we do,” Severus promised.

“All right then. In that case, I’ll see you two back here next month. Take care, you two.”

They thanked her and she ushered Severus out to allow Sirius to dress again in private. He found Severus waiting for him outside the hospital wing and kissed him.

“We were right,” Sirius said.

“We were.”

“I don’t know why that makes me happier than it should.”

“I’m mostly glad we don’t have to switch the pronouns we’ve been using.”

Sirius laughed. “I think that’s it. So.”

“So?”

“Who do we tell first?”

Severus grinned and they walked, hand in hand, down to the Great Hall.

“Well, first off, we need to alert my mom...do we want to tell your parents?”

Sirius hummed. “Well...yeah, but I don’t want them in Casey’s life, you know?”

“Agreed. So...unless we can get permission to use a floo network, we’ll probably have to send them a letter. Meaning they won’t be the first to know.”

“I think Dumbledore will be all right with us flooing your mom to let her know. My parents...they can find out in a letter as far as I care. So I’ll write that letter if you’ll ask Dumbledore permission to floo call your mom.”

Severus nodded. “Should we wait to tell our friends?”

“I think they’d be willing to keep it to themselves, but if Skeeter finds us again, she might find out we really are expecting a daughter and if she finds out, then there’d be no point keeping it secret.”

“Point taken. Might as well announce that Casey’s full name will be Cassandra Nicole Prince, then,” Severus decided. Sirius grinned.

“How excited do you think Lily will be?”

“Too excited,” Severus said, groaning. “Like, puppy-excited. You turn into a dog. How well can you control the wiggle butt when happy or excited?”

Sirius laughed. “There is no control. It’s what dogs do when they’re happy.”

“She’ll likely be happier.”

“I don’t know if that should make me afraid or not.”

“I’d be afraid,” Severus said. “She can be scary when she wants to be without even trying.”

“At this point, I’m used to it,” Sirius said. “Then again, she’s in my house, so that might have a place in it.” Severus nodded.

“Likely does. Still, I’m kind of afraid that she might be tempted to run off with Casey once she’s born.”

Sirius laughed. “I doubt it, but even if she did want to dare it, I’d like to see her try.”

Severus pulled him into an empty corridor and kissed him. Sirius hummed, answering the kiss and running his hands through Severus’ hair. When the kiss broke, Sirius pressed his forehead to Severus’.

“I love you, Sev,” he said.

“Love you, too,” Severus replied quietly. “Want to fuck you right now.”

“Then why aren’t you?” Sirius asked, grinning.

Severus arched a brow and cast a couple charms to ward off by-passers as Sirius undid his trousers.

A twinge of discomfort shot through him as his fingers brushed against his bump.

Severus, not noticing or deciding to ignore it, pulled Sirius’ trousers down further, along with his pants. He closed his lips around Sirius’ cock, driving away any negative emotions attacking Sirius with each suck.

Sirius let need and desire take over, cursing as delicious sensations wrecked his body.

He ran his fingers through Severus' hair and mumbled encouragement. Sirius shuddered at the vibrations made from the way Severus hummed.

Severus pushed two fingers inside Sirius' canal and thrust them deep inside him. Sirius gasped nearly ripping some of Severus' hair. He let go of Severus' hair and pressed his palms to the wall instead.

"Fuck," Sirius hissed. "Sev, I'm gonna come..."

Severus' fingers crooked inside him.

Sirius gasped once more, nearly shouting as he came.

#

Sirius went to dinner with a bright grin on his face.

He sat between Remus and James, and piled his plate with chicken and roasted potatoes.

"Cheese...where's the cheese?" he asked.

"Not here," James said.

He pulled his wand out and waved it.

"Accio cheese," Sirius said before putting it away. "There. Now to wait."

"Don't you think you should've been more specific," Remus asked, smiling. "You may get buried in a cheese tower."

"That's not the worst thing that could happen."

"You'll end up hating cheese after the baby's born," James said.

"That *is* the worst thing that could happen."

Remus and James laughed.

"So?" James said. "The baby's official sex is..."

Sirius' grin widened. "Female."

"Damn it!" James shouted.

Remus laughed loudly as James dug into his pockets and tossed him a bag of gold. Remus sniggered as he weighed the bag.

"You better not have skimped on me, Potter."

"Fuck off, Lupin."

"You bet on my baby's sex?" Sirius asked.

A block of cheddar cheese landed on his plate and began to melt. They watched to see if there would be more flying cheese. Seeing none, Sirius sliced the block and let the wedges melt.

"Are you surprised?" Remus asked, setting the gold in one of his robe's pockets.

“No,” Sirius admitted, “But it would’ve been nice if you didn’t.”

He took a bite of his cheese riddled food and hummed happily.

“It can’t be that good,” Remus said. “It smells a bit more than I’d like it to.”

Sirius swallowed. “Not my problem,” he said.

“How is it your sense of smell is still not on par with Remus’?” James asked. “You’re pregnant.”

“So that means I should be queasier than Remus?”

“Wow, James.”

“I was queasy. For months. I’m not queasy anymore. Morning sickness does end. Eventually. But I can only talk for myself, you know.”

“Valid point, but even then, I would think your senses would be a little bit heightened because of it.”

“They are,” Sirius said. “But I’m also getting visions of the future that I’d rather not deal with. At least, those visions don’t leave me feeling like I’m going to vomit violently.”

Considering the conversation done, Sirius took a large bite out of his meal. James and Remus allowed him to eat in peace.

#

Severus, Sirius, and Lily walked to the sixth floor, heading to a meeting with Dumbledore where they would view the long unused married dorms.

As early as a century and a half ago, it was acceptable for students to marry as young as sixteen. Going back half a millennium, some students would marry as young as twelve or thirteen.

Getting married now, though, well, most students wouldn’t dare. Not until they had graduated.

The last couple to use them graduated two decades ago. Since then, they’d been sealed off, waiting until another couple decided to use them.

Lily’s notebook floated beside them, quick quotes quill jotting every word spoken as they discussed the upcoming wedding – just a week away.

“It’ll be too cold to have the ceremony outside,” Lily said. “And given how small it will be, we could use an unused classroom instead of the Great Hall.”

“Sounds good to me,” Severus said.

Sirius nodded his agreement, looking around as if he expected an attack. He caught them staring at him and he grinned apologetically.

“I think I’ve another vision coming on,” he said.

They accepted this and continued on. Severus wrapped an arm around Sirius’ shoulders.

“Professor Dumbledore agreed to officiate. I think our heads of house will witness. Then there’s your parents...still not inviting Sirius’ parents?”

“Yep.”

“I don’t want them anywhere near us. Not on our wedding day, not when the baby finally decides she’s ready to come out of me. Not ever, if I can help it.”

A silence passed between them like a beat. Then, Severus asked:

“Is childbirth more painful for a wizard who can carry than a witch?”

Lily and Sirius chuckled nervously.

“I don’t think it can be compared,” Severus said. “It’s painful all around.”

“My mum told me and my sister once that it’s similar to having constipation while on your period but worse,” Lily said. “Yeah. Painful doesn’t describe it...agony is closer.”

“Then why do people go through it then?” Severus asked.

“Because that’s how the human race continues,” Lily said with a shrug. “And in the end, I’ve heard it said that the mother – or carrier, in Sirius’ case – forgets how much pain they were in once it’s all done and they see their baby for the first time.”

Severus turned to Sirius, eyes wide.

“I’m so sorry.”

“I would have had to go through this eventually. Besides, healers have devised spells to take the edge off a bit,” he said.

“Muggles, too,” Lily said. “But only really recently...the procedure itself had been around for about fifty years or so, but only recently is used primarily to help labor pains and contractions.”

“All in all, you’ve no reason to panic, Love,” Sirius assured him. “I’ll be fine.”

Severus groaned, still unconvinced.

“I’ll just take your word for it.”

“I can live with that.”

Severus went ahead of them as Lily wrapped her arm around Sirius’, giving him something to lean on as they climbed the steps.

“So, I know you’re busy with the wedding right now, being next week and all, but would you and Sev consider having a baby shower?”

“Probably, but not for at least a month or two after we get married,” Sirius said. “But it would be weird not to accept a bunch of baby stuff when you’re expecting a baby.”

“I completely agree,” Lily said, “especially since you’re expecting a little princess.”

“Oh, fuck, don’t say that!” Sirius laughed. “Casey’s not even left my body yet!”

“Do you deny it?”

“No, I don’t, but even so, it’s a terrifying thought,” Sirius said. “To be honest, though, I don’t think

she'll be much of a princess..."

"With me as godmother, she'll have a high chance of being one," Lily declared unapologetically. "Then add you and Severus and Casey will be so spoiled, you've no idea."

"That's terrifying."

"I'm sure she'll be better behaved than Potter."

"I don't know if I should be offended on James' behalf or agree, so I'm just gonna do both."

Lily grinned. "You love me anyway."

They met Severus at the top of the stairs. They let him tease them about being slow old biddies then Sirius ripped into him:

"You try walking fast when you're carrying an extra..."

Sirius rubbed his stomach, trying to guess how much weight he put on since Casey was conceived.

"I don't know how much extra weight I've got, but I'm carrying a baby and it doesn't make it easy to walk anywhere fast."

Severus apologized, properly cowed.

They continued on their way, making sure they had everything covered for the wedding.

Professors Dumbledore, McGonagall, and Slughorn stood outside a door, waiting for them while talking about the latest gossip found in the Prophet.

Dumbledore greeted them and opened the door.

"You'll have to decide on a password yourself," he said, "Something you two may agree on."

The door swung inward and he let them enter.

It was a decagonal common room representing each house's sigil and colors along eight of the walls, each with a curtained window. There were four six-person tables with chairs.

A large hearth was carved into the ninth wall, blazing brightly. Before it were two brown couches and two cream armchairs surrounding a glass coffee table.

The floor was covered by a black and white lattice patterned carpet.

The tenth wall, behind them, was the door.

"Wow," Lily said.

"I thought we were being shown a bedroom."

Dumbledore smiled.

"Each of these walls you see will lead into another hallway with a selection of bedrooms," he said. "Each bedroom is fully stocked, same as the dorms, with some differences: one bed, two wardrobes, and a full bathroom. Once, centuries ago, every single room would be in use. Now, well, you can have your pick of the lot."

Sirius and Severus glanced at each other.

“I’m not going through the Gryffindor wall,” Severus said.

“Fine, but all I really care for is that the room will be big enough to also keep Casey close.”

“The larger rooms are at the end of the halls,” Slughorn said. “So that may fit your needs and the baby’s needs better.”

Severus went toward the Slytherins walls/hallway and vanished behind one of them. He stepped back into the room, grinning.

“This is so cool!”

“If Gryffindor’s out, then so is Slytherin.”

“Fine...our room will be in the Ravenclaw hallway.”

Sirius grinned. “Should we tell your mum?”

“No,” Severus said. “She’d never let it go that I never went into Ravenclaw instead...As if the hat gave me half a chance.”

Sirius entered the hallway first.

It was brightly lit with a grey carpet with a series of wood doors on either side. Severus stood beside him.

“Reminds me a bit of a hotel,” he said. “The three- or four-star variety.”

“Except we got our pick of the rooms,” Sirius replied.

He walked to the end of the hall, Severus behind him, before stopping in front of a small table rested at the end with a bronze statue of the Ravenclaw eagle in mid-flight resting on top of the blue tablecloth.

He looked at the door to his right. A blank, gold plaque was nailed to the door.

“How about this one?” he said, pointing at it.

Severus shrugged.

“Let’s take a look.”

Severus reached out and opened the door.

Candles flickered on, crackling the dust that had covered them for so long.

The furniture was covered by white sheets.

The air smelled musty, so Sirius kept back while Severus looked around.

“It’s certainly big enough,” he said. “And likely the elves will have it inhabitable for us after the wedding.”

Or so he hoped.

Sirius hoped so, too.

If not for Casey, he would be in the room as well.

“All the rooms might look like this,” Sirius said. “Dusty. I mean.”

“Highly possible,” Severus agreed.

They looked at a couple other rooms anyway.

Each room was dusty, smelled musty, and filled with white sheeted furniture.

They decided that the largest room was the second room on the left from the end of the hall.

It had a larger bathroom, too, and room for Casey when she’d arrive: room for a bassinet, a changing station, a wardrobe, and a toy chest.

They returned to the large common room and told them which room they chose.

Dumbledore clapped his hands and four house elves apparated in front of them with a crack.

Severus led them back to their chosen room as Sirius decided to take a seat on one of the couches.

Lily joined him.

“Too bad the rest of the houses aren’t designed like this,” she said. “Might help with inter-house relationships, having just one large common room for everyone.”

“I think it’d be a little too much,” Sirius said. “There are at least a thousand of us studying at Hogwarts at a time.”

“Ah,” Lily said. “That’s true.”

“But it will get a bit lonely in here with just me and Sev,” Sirius said. “It’s just so big!”

“I think you’ll find you’ll like the space once Casey’s born.”

“True, but until then, I think we’ll open it up to our friends.”

Lily grinned. “That’d be fun,” she said.

Sirius turned to her, returning her grin, only to be drawn into a vision...

The boy who lived...

Come to die...

Harry, no!

“Sirius!”

Sirius gasped and doubled over, battling a wave of nausea.

Lily rubbed his back as he battled for air and keeping his food down.

Lily let Professor McGonagall take over while she ran to fetch Severus and Professor Dumbledore.

“Professor Slughorn’s summoned a potion for you, Black,” she said. “But if you need to vomit, do so. Don’t fight it.”

Sirius did so.

His lunch spewed out violently over the carpet. The smell left him feeling more nauseas, bringing more bile out and over the carpet. He gasped and spat, tears trailing down his face.

Professor McGonagall cleaned the mess with a flick of her wand, then him just as easily with a less intense cleaning spell as Slughorn wobbled over with a vial for him.

Sirius drank the vial’s contents, feeling the nausea lift off him. He returned it to Slughorn who pocketed it before approaching Dumbledore as he returned to the common room.

Sirius massaged his forehead, stomach still queasy.

“I’ve not...I thought the morning sickness...”

“Nausea will come and go,” McGonagall said. “Anything could trigger it. The elves were supposed to make sure that the common room and halls were dust and allergen free.”

“It would’ve bothered me when I walked in, then. I’d been –”

“Sirius!” Severus approached them, worry in his eyes. “What happened?”

“Vision came,” he said. “It was really fucking intense.”

“You’re not supposed to be fighting them.”

“I wasn’t trying to fight it. I knew it was coming, but...I guess...it felt...”

Severus took his hands in his own and kissed them. “You’re all right, though?”

“Bit queasy still, but yes. I’m all right.”

Severus continued to frown. “Was it one of the bad ones?”

Sirius nodded, sighing. “I’ll write it down later, but I’m wiped out right now.”

Severus exhaled, relieved, and kissed his forehead.

A couple minutes passed before Sirius felt well enough to head back to Gryffindor Tower.

McGonagall walked him out, a hand around his shoulders in case he had another spell.

Sirius didn’t think he would, but he decided not to argue while Severus had been left to explain Casey’s visions to Slughorn.

McGonagall, thankfully, didn’t ask about it.

Not even when she dropped him off at the Fat Lady’s portrait and sent him to bed, ordering him to rest and that she’d expect him back in class on Monday.

<http://www.birthbeyondbias.com/birthbeyondbias/2014/4/24/history-of-the-epidural>

I'm sorry, Siri...but on the bright side, I'll be getting to the wedding in the next chapter :)

Chapter 26

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

When he got back, he spied James in bed, having what he guessed was another depressive bout over Lily and Regulus. He didn't ask.

After a couple hours of rest, Sirius felt somewhat better.

Still, he wished that Casey's visions weren't so disturbing. He could handle less disturbing visions, but the ones where the boy who may be James' son showed up, well...

"I've got it," Remus declared in lieu of greeting.

Sirius eased up into a sitting position.

James had not moved.

"James, do you still want to forget about Evans?"

"Don't know," James admitted.

Remus sat at the end of James' bed, holding a small vial. Sirius watched them, wondering at the vial.

"It's a Memory-Be-Gone potion. It's easier to control than a memory charm. Just drink the whole vial and the memories you want gone will go away, along with the emotional pain they brought."

"Are you sure that's safe?" Sirius asked, frowning.

He trusted Remus and he would always trust Remus with his life, but somehow, the potion he held gave him pause.

"What if it backfires and James forgets us, too?"

"That's why I was reluctant to use the memory charm," Remus said. "Slughorn swore that this potion would do the trick when I asked him about it."

"How'd you convince Slughorn to tell you about this potion?" Sirius asked.

"Told him I was thinking about extra credit work," Remus said, shrugging.

That would work. Remus was the most studious of the three of them.

He placed the vial on James' bedside table.

"Keep it. Drink it when you're ready to."

James sat up and grabbed his glasses. Once they were on, he picked up the vial and studied it.

"You have an option now," Sirius said, still feeling wary. He couldn't say why he felt wary of it, just that he did. "So think it through before you make a decision, Prongs. Okay?"

"What if it were reversed?" James asked.

Sirius blinked, stunned.

“Would you want me talking you out of this? I can’t keep seeing her with your brother, Pads. I can’t stop loving her and I know it’s unhealthy. I know that now.”

He sighed.

“I need to forget her and let her be with someone she isn’t...”

James swallowed, voice quivering.

“She’s afraid of me, Sirius, and that gets to me more than seeing her with Reg. Do you know what that’s like? Knowing that the one person you adore and would do anything for is afraid of you...”

“I’m just afraid this is going to change you for the worst,” Sirius said. “I’m afraid that if you drink it, you won’t really get better. I can’t explain it better than that. Maybe it’s Casey’s abilities and if so, well, Casey isn’t even born yet. She’s no power to tell you what to do, and I’m not trying to do that either.”

James nodded. “I just don’t want to feel broken anymore.”

Sirius stood and joined his friends at James’ bed. James wiped angrily at his eyes. Sirius embraced him, hating how he couldn’t do more to help him.

He wondered how much of James’ pain went unsaid. Almost a year ago, their positions were reversed. He was the one feeling hopeless and broken. James had vowed that it’d be better.

He was right and he was wrong.

It was better for Sirius, sure. He was getting married in a week.

But not for James...not as long as he still obsessed over Lily.

After a moment, Sirius let James go and motioned for Remus to go with him, leaving James alone for the time being so to make the decision alone.

“You’re certain there won’t be any setbacks.”

“If there is, we’ll handle it,” Remus promised. “I didn’t want to tell him this because he does need to make the decision alone and it likely wouldn’t matter if he did know, but I promise that there is a potion that will restore the memories if he decides he wants them. Or if it does end up worse than it already is.”

Sirius sighed, feeling a little relieved.

“We agreed that this might be his best chance at moving on.”

“I know,” he said. “I just can’t...I’ve a bad feeling. Like if he does this, in forgetting Lily, he might forget a part of himself or we’ll lose the part of him that makes him...James. Do I make sense?”

“A bit. I get what you mean. That’s the risk we’re taking.”

“At the same time, what if it does work and he ends up falling in love with her all over?”

“There’s that risk, too,” Remus agreed. “Hopefully it won’t come to that. I promise we have a way out if it ends up worse, but right now, it’s James’ decision to make, whether we agree with it or not.”

He has to do this himself, just as you had to take matters in your own hand to get Severus' back."

With that, they sat by the hearth.

Time slowly passed by as they waited, filling the minutes with homework and games.

#

James held the vial up, examining the contents.

It was light blue, shimmering.

He uncorked it and smelled the liquid.

Odorless.

Hopefully also tasteless, or at least a pleasant taste.

Before he could change his mind, he pressed the vial to his lips and drained the potion.

Darkness overtook him.

#

They found the broken vial on the floor.

Remus repaired it and put it in his pocket.

Sirius tucked James into bed, removing his glasses and putting them back on the nightstand.

"I guess we'll find out how it worked in the morning," Sirius said with a heavy sigh.

"Yeah," Remus agreed. "I hope it works."

"So do I," Sirius agreed.

With that, they went to bed as well. Sirius barely slept, stroking his belly as he worried about James. It felt that Casey worried, too.

But why?

What would the potion do?

In the end, he wrote about it to Severus. He didn't expect to get a response back until the morning, so he tried to sleep again after putting his concerns to paper.

He didn't know when he fell asleep, but when he woke, it was already ten o'clock.

Why did his friends not wake him up?

Sirius sat up and went to take a shower. Once clean and dried and dressed, Sirius headed to the kitchens for a quick breakfast.

The elves were more than happy to oblige before he would have to head to class.

He went to McGonagall's classroom and apologized, explaining that he overslept.

While unimpressed, McGonagall told him to get a copy of lecture notes from either James or Remus then sent him on his way.

It was as close to forgiveness as one could expect from her and he took it gratefully.

Sirius found Remus and James at the lake, skipping stones.

The squid was swatting the stones away, perhaps thinking it a game. Or, more likely, finding it rather annoying and wanting them to stop.

Whatever it thought, it was, in a way, playing with his friends.

“Why’d you not wake me?” he called once close enough.

“We tried,” James said, skipping another stone. “You were all but dead.”

Sirius hummed. That would make sense, given how he couldn’t sleep. He glanced at Remus, who grinned. So far, it seemed there were no side effects from the potion.

“Fair enough. Already talked to McGonagall. Do either of you have any notes I can borrow?”

“Way ahead of you,” Remus said. He grabbed his bag and pulled out a roll of parchment. “My own notes, duplicated.”

Sirius grinned. “You’re awesome, mate.”

He tucked the roll into his bag and joined them on the grass.

James found another stone and tossed it with a flick of his wrist. It only skipped once before the squid’s tentacles swatted it to another part of the lake.

“How’s my goddaughter?” James asked, searching for another suitable stone.

“She’s as well as can be.”

“Good. And the wedding?”

“Next week.”

“Yeah, not what I meant, Pads.”

Sirius glanced at Remus again, who shrugged. Perhaps a minor side effect.

“That’s going well, too. The robes have already come in. Severus and I will be getting them tailored and refitted this weekend.”

James hummed, examining a smooth grey stone, oval in shape.

“Want us to come, too? Remus and I might need something to wear for it.”

“If you like,” Sirius said.

He caught sight of Lily and Regulus a few meters away, laying a blanket down beneath the shades of a tree and adding their books to hold it down before sitting themselves.

Regulus pulled Lily into his lap, causing her to squeak shrilly and laugh. James turned to them. He stared at them a moment, frowning.

“Who’s that girl with your brother, Pads?”

Sirius swallowed. “Lily Evans,” he said.

He felt he was shaking.

What if seeing her again would make him remember?

What if knowing her name gave him déjà vu?

James snorted. “Way to go, Reg,” he said, skipping the stone. “She’s hot.”

Remus and Sirius released the breath both had been holding.

It worked.

But for how long?

Would he fall in love with someone who would be better suited to him this time?

Or would he fall in love with Lily again?

Grow to obsess over her again?

Sirius hoped not. He hoped that the potion would help him do more than forget Lily.

He hoped it would help James move on.

#

The robes made him seem slimmer than he was. Sirius still looked obviously pregnant, of course, but more fifteen weeks than twenty.

Behind him, his friends teased and whistled. He didn’t mind it. He looked pretty damn good.

“Are you sure, you want to marry Severus?” James asked, grinning. “Because I’m tempted to steal you away.” Remus mock-gasped, hand dramatically placed on his heart.

“You? What? Prongs, a wolf has a better chance of dating a dog than a stag,” Remus joked.

Sirius snorted. “Sorry, mates, you’ll have to find a way to be together yourselves. I’m quite content with Sev. Besides, unless something goes really fucking wrong between us, why would I leave the other father of my child?”

James and Remus exchanged a look.

Then, grinning, James slid into Remus’ lap and kissed him fully on the mouth. Sirius gaped at him. Remus froze when James sat on him, just as stunned. Smirking, James climbed off and back in his seat.

“What? Problem?”

“Just that I always thought you were heterosexual,” Sirius said.

“Oh, I am,” James said, “Doesn’t mean I’m against making out with my friends. If straight girls can do it, so can straight guys. I have no qualms about kissing either of you. But I will not sleep with either of you. That’s all.”

He stood and looked around.

Sirius glanced at Remus. Remus still looked as if he'd been hit with a full body bind. He was flushed.

"Mate, are you all right?"

"That was not expected and I kind of want to kiss him again. Is that weird?"

"A little," Sirius said, laughing. "Not as bad as you'd think, do you?"

"Scratchier than kissing a girl, but yeah, not as bad as I thought it'd be. Different...does this mean I'm gay?" he asked, eyes wide.

"No," Sirius said. "You may be bi. Have fun with that soul searching. Remember we love you, Moony, regardless your sexual preferences."

Remus chuckled weakly. "Thanks, mate."

#

"Fuck," Severus hissed, leaning into the mirror as he observed a noticeable bump marring his face at the corner of his nose, looking very much like a third nostril. He poked the zit, testing its firmness.

Cursing again, he went to grab his wand.

A couple of his roommates sat up when Severus bumped into a trunk and cursed aloud.

"Wedding jitters."

"No."

Not yet.

He half-hopped to his bedside table and picked up his wand and returned to the bathroom.

Severus took a breath and aimed the tip of his wand at his nose.

Normally he wouldn't bother and wait for it to be ready for popping, but he'd be *damned* if he had acne this bad when he was supposed to get married.

And yet he couldn't dare it. There'd been too many problems with the spell in question and he didn't want to make it worse.

Cursing once more, he debated wrestling with it the muggle way.

But that would leave a scar if he was lucky.

So he sighed and decided to leave it for later.

There was time yet and it was a Hogsmeade weekend. If he really needed to, he could grab something for it at the apothecary that would take care of it in a matter of minutes.

It'd be safer, too.

Satisfied with that decision, he climbed into the shower, cleaning himself with more dedication

than before. He didn't know if he was giddy or nervous.

He supposed both were normal feelings on one's wedding day.

After his shower, he dried and dressed warmly.

If he was making a stop to Hogsmeade for an acne relieving potion, he wasn't going in his formalwear: that much was certain.

The four other boys still slept, which was fine by him.

Severus liked the quiet hours of the morning.

He grabbed the notebook, deciding to see if Sirius was up, and went downstairs.

He relit the hearth and sat cross-legged on one of the leather couches. It squeaked under him as he adjusted into a more comfortable position.

Once he opened the notebook, he snorted at the latest entry:

Got a fucking zit!

Damn it!

I don't know why I'm even telling you this.

Severus replied quickly.

I've got one, too.

Planning to stop at Hogsmeade later.

He set the quill down and stretched as Sirius replied.

I should've thought of that. I was gonna have one of my mates cast that iffy acne-be-gone spell or something. You're idea's better.

My ideas are always better.

Oh, I don't know about that. I'm sure there are things you've done in the past that weren't that bright.

True, but this is not one of them.

Fair enough. You think it'd be okay for us to go together? I don't want to jinx anything.

Siri, I don't think anything's jinxed or cursed or whatever is going through your head. You've been talking to Lily too much about muggle superstitions.

Maybe a little bit, but better safe than sorry.

He had a point.

Severus rubbed his neck.

Let's not focus on what could go wrong when we don't know if anything even will go wrong. The

only thing I want to worry about is getting my vows right.

Your memory's better than mine, Luv.

Not the point.

Nervous?

Maybe.

Don't be. If anyone should be nervous, it's me.

Why would you be nervous?

Sirius' response did not come.

It was all right. Severus had other things to do rather than gripe about acne and wedding superstitions that may or may not have any weight.

While he waited for Sirius to respond, he checked with one of the elves to see if their new room was ready so that his belongings could be moved to the room.

Assured that it was, Severus gave the elf leave to move his belongings there.

While the elves did so, he checked the notebook.

How can I not be nervous?

I hurt you before and I don't want to risk that again. I love you, Severus. I've waited for this day since I knew I loved you. Then I almost lost you because I was an idiot.

I'm still awed that you forgave me.

I'm more awed that you're excited to have a baby with me. I used to think you hated me, sometimes, given how I had been. I know you've forgiven me, but sometimes I wonder how you can forgive me at all. Or even want to have Casey with me.

Sometimes I wonder if I'm dreaming or hallucinating. That I'll come out of it and you'll still hate me or still be marrying Regulus...or that we never really knew each other at all...

Severus rubbed the back of his neck.

Still that.

He supposed it'd be something he'd always have to reassure him on. Yes, he was angry about their past. Yes, he sometimes still had moments where he was angry and hurt by it.

Siri, I'm not going to leave. I love you, too.

I might not be the sort to openly say so or show it often, but I do love you.

You made me feel safe when everything I knew was falling apart. I know now it was falling into place, but I wouldn't have gotten through my mum being in Azkaban without you.

Again, I can't promise I won't have days I feel angry or annoyed, but I can get through them now

because you're with me. You grew up. That's all I wanted.

I always knew that you loved me, but sometimes it wasn't easy to see. You've gotten better and I am impressed by the person you've become.

This afternoon, I'll be there. Hopefully zit-free.

Severus snorted at the last sentence, grinning. He knew it'd lighten Sirius, too.

"Master Prince's belongings have been moved to the married dormitory," the elf told him.

"Thanks," he said. "Please go check on Sirius, make sure he gets his stuff there, too." The elf bowed and disappeared with a *pop*.

I second that zit-free motion.

Thank you, Sev. I know I'm being irrational, but I can't seem to help it.

It's all right.

Pregnancy hormones likely.

Maybe it is. So what? We've hurt each other enough to allow a little doubt here and there. It'll happen. I'm all right with that.

I don't expect everything to be all right every day, but we'll be better than our parents. That's all we can hope to be. Fair enough?

I fucking love you.

Love you, too.

Going to breakfast while the house elves move my things. See you at the Great Hall?

I'll be there in a bit.

Severus closed his notebook and tucked it under his arm before making his escape. Even with his good mood, he could still feel the zit at the corner of his nose.

Fucking luck, he thought as he headed to the great hall, trying not to poke at the cyst.

He spied Eileen outside the doors to the Great Hall, talking to Sirius. Severus picked up pace and once close enough, he wrapped his arms around Sirius' waist and laid his chin on Sirius' shoulders.

"Hi," he greeted, pecking Sirius' cheek. "You're here early, Mum."

"Someone has to make sure you two are ready."

Severus released Sirius to embrace Eileen, who then examined his own zit.

"Both of you have such unfortunate luck."

"Wow," Severus mumbled. "Thanks. I feel great, Mom." He rolled his eyes, spying the red bump on Sirius' chin. Sirius mock-glared and covered the bump with his hand.

"I'll get something to help with it, lads," she promised. "Go eat. Big day ahead."

No need to tell us, Severus thought.

Chapter End Notes

Tried to do a chapter for James now that he's gotten Lily off the mind, but could only manage a half chapter.

Likely going to do a sequel focusing on Lily/James anyway when time permits, so I'll definitely delve into the new James more then.

Chapter 27

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

“Here you are,” Eileen said, approaching Severus. She held a bottle in her hand.

Severus stood still as she applied the potion to the blemish.

She grinned. “Oh, that’s much better. Give it another few minutes and it’ll be gone.”

Severus grinned. “Thanks, Mum. Have you seen Sirius already?”

“I have. Because he couldn’t help himself picking at it, it may be a little longer for it to heal, but it’ll go away before the ceremony starts.”

Eileen kissed his cheek and went to talk to Dumbledore outside the room.

Severus glanced around the room, eyes resting on the altar on the other end.

Resting on it was a silk rope, a candle, and a chalice.

Behind it, a besom rested upside down, decorated in flowers and white silk.

At the four corners of the table were symbols of the elements – a candle for fire, a small cauldron for water, a stick of incense for air, and a bowl of salt for earth.

Severus approached the altar, examining the items carefully.

They were all white or gold or a violet purple in color. Most of the materials were made of white marble or glass. Only a couple of items were gold – the candle’s pillar stand and the altar itself was gold-inlaid.

The silk rope had strands of gold thread woven in it, as well as purple thread.

He picked up a plaque of a pentacle, examining the black lines etched into the wood. He put it back as close to where he found it as he could. Severus moved away from the altar and looked around the room.

It was another hall: larger than a classroom, but significantly smaller than the Great Hall.

There were two rows of benches and two columns. They agreed that, given how small the party would be, there wouldn’t be need for a lot of seating.

The benches were covered with white cushions and cloth, and each end had a pillar of flower garlands in purple, white, and yellow. Severus glanced at the door.

Already, white lights danced around the doorframe, creating a sort of arch.

The walls were covered in sheer white fabrics, held up by garland wreaths.

The room was beautiful.

No denying.

Severus wondered if it was too much, and not for the first time. He and Sirius let his mother and Lily run away with it, he supposed.

Severus sat down and fixed his shoes' ties. He wasn't going to risk embarrassment by tripping over his own feet.

Once that was done, he smoothed down the robe he'd chosen – black with a dark purple hemming over a suit of white and black with a matching purple silk tie.

He had agreed to tie his hair back for the occasion – and remove the metal bar that usually remained in his pinna.

He had not forfeited earrings entirely as both ears bore matching silver rings that were so small, the metal brushed against the underside of the lobes.

He knew Sirius would be wearing a similar garb of lighter colors – white and violet rather than black and purple. The decision had nothing to do with one being “the bride” or the submissive partner.

Such an idea was stupid.

Rather it was more to appeal to how they were meant to be two halves of the same whole, like a Taijitu symbol or something similar.

“Nervous?”

Severus glanced up at Dumbledore. “A little,” he admitted. “But excited, too.”

“Good.” Dumbledore patted his shoulder. “Very good. And good thing you decided to hold the ceremony inside. It's snowing quite heavily outside at the moment.”

Severus glanced at the covered windows.

“Might be bad weather to be outside for, but perfect to see, inside,” he said.

Dumbledore smiled his closed mouth smile, eyes twinkling.

Severus flicked his wand and the coverings on the windows swept to the sides to reveal the snowfall.

The flakes were large and fat falling from a brown-grey sky.

Severus leaned back, quite pleased with the image.

“So, Professor,” he said. “Any last advice before the ceremony?” Dumbledore chuckled.

“No. I think you'll do just fine as a husband and a father.”

Severus grinned. “Thanks, Sir.”

Dumbledore pulled out what seemed to be a pocket watch, glanced at it, and then pocketed it again.

“Fifteen minutes till we begin. Shall we open the doors?”

Severus glanced at the entrance with its dancing lights.

“Yes.”

#

“Ready?” Lily asked, poking her head in.

Sirius grinned.

“As ready as I can be.”

“See you at the altar,” Lily said, winking at him.

Once she was gone, Sirius checked his appearance one last time. Assured that he looked as good as he could hope to look, Sirius stepped out of the room he’d been hiding in (dressing room, so they said) and joined the wedding party.

Lily and Regulus grinned at him and Eileen winked, stopping Severus from looking behind at him.

She whispered in his ear and Severus groaned, “Fine.”

Sirius wanted to laugh, but opted not to, swallowing it down as much as he could.

Eileen and Severus walked inside and the noise died down as violin music echoed off the stone walls. Regulus and Lily went after them at the same leisurely pace.

Sirius embraced his belly, stroking the curve.

Be nice to me today, Casey, he prayed.

It’d not be ideal if he got sick in the middle of the ceremony.

Once Lily and Regulus were halfway down, he followed, fixing his eyes solely on Severus.

He could see his eyes widen and his face split into a grin. Sirius returned the grin as he approached. The guests, he knew, were standing and staring at him, but that didn’t matter.

There weren’t many of them, anyway.

When he was close enough, Severus took his hand in his and they faced the altar, and Dumbledore. The incense lit, giving off a smoky scent of Palo Santo, sage, and cedar.

Dumbledore took the incense and walked around the altar and them, reciting a spell under his breath.

The air around them lightened. He set the incense down and picked up the broom, casting another spell as he swept around them in another circle.

Lastly, he placed the broom on the ground behind them.

“By Earth, we build our foundations,” Dumbledore began.

He turned to the north and picked up the bowl of salt.

“By the magic of the North, we ask for our foundations to be built.”

The bowl glowed green for a brief moment.

He set it down and approached the incense again.

“By air, we make our intentions known.”

Lifting it again, he faced East.

“By the Magic of the East, we wish to bless a union of two hearts into one.”

The incense took on a brief golden glow.

Then he moved to the candle, which flickered to life.

“By fire, we experience passion.”

He held the candle up.

“By the Magic of the South, shine down favorably on this rite.”

The candle glowed red.

He set it down and approached the last totem: the cauldron.

“By water, we learn to flow.”

He lifted the small bowl up.

“By the magic of the West, we seek fluidity through this ceremony.”

The cauldron glowed blue as briefly as the other totems.

Placed back down, Dumbledore stood behind the altar.

“Are all here in perfect love and perfect trust?” he asked.

“We are,” the wedding party and the guests echoed.

Dumbledore bade the guests sit.

“In the years of the Trojan War,” he began, “Two brave men joined the battle. One of these men was Achilles, son of Peleus and the Goddess Thetis. With Achilles was Patroclus the son of Menoetius. His lover and friend.

“During the war, Achilles was insulted by King Agamemnon and for a time, refused to fight. In such time, the war began to turn sour for the Greeks.

“In time, Achilles allowed Patroclus to don his armor and enter the battle. His engagement in the battle led to his death at the hands of Hector with the aid of the God Apollo.

“When told of Patroclus’ death, Achilles mourned and raged until his own death not long after at the hands of Paris. Since those days, Achilles and Patroclus have ascended to Godhood, named as patrons to same-sex partnerships, such as the union we are here to celebrate.”

He raised his hands in the air.

“Achilles and Patroclus, we welcome you into this circle. We ask you both to smile down on Severus and Sirius as they celebrate their union and allow them to become one heart and one soul.”

He motioned for them to come closer.

They drew their wands out and lit the candle. The flame jumped into the air for a moment, then flickered down to a normal sized tear drop shaped flame dancing in the air.

Dumbledore picked up the chalice and handed it to Severus.

Severus turned to Sirius and held the cup between them.

“I vow to you the first cut of my meat and the first sip of my wine. From this day, it will only be your name I cry out in the night and into your eyes that I smile each morning. I shall be a shield for your back as you are for mine. Nor shall a grievous word be spoken about us, for our marriage is sacred between us and no stranger shall hear my grievance. Above and beyond this, I will cherish and honor you through this life and into the next.”

He pressed the lip of the cup to Sirius’ mouth, allowing him to take a sip.

Pumpkin juice – a better option, given his pregnancy.

Sirius then took the cup from him and recited the same vow before giving Severus the drink.

Dumbledore waved his wand and the rope came to life. Severus set the cup down before the rope became too entangled around their wrists.

“Now you are bound one to the other,” Dumbledore said. “With a tie that is not easy to break. Take the time of binding before the final vows are made to learn what you need to know: to grow in wisdom and love. That your marriage will be strong, and that your love will last in this life and beyond.”

Sirius and Severus recited in unison, exchanging their wedding bands:

“You are blood of my blood and bone of my bone. I give you my body that we two might be one. I give you my spirit ‘til life shall be done.”

The rope slid free from them and returned to the altar in a neat coil.

Dumbledore then opened the circle.

Severus and Sirius faced their guests and approached the besom on the ground. They jumped over it and raised their clasped hands in the air.

“Ladies and gentle-wizards,” Dumbledore said. “I am honored to present Mr.’s Prince-Black.”

The lights at the door spun and ignited in small fireworks around the room.

The guests stood to applaud them.

As they did so, the benches transfigured into tables and chairs.

The garlands became centerpieces.

The round tables created a half circle around the room.

The altar was also transformed into a rectangular table while the ceremonial items were set aside for later, with the wedding gifts.

Sirius lifted Severus' hand to his lips and pressed a kiss to it.

"Now what?" he asked.

"Now we try to get through this," Severus said. "To be honest, I'm really just looking forward to the food. I don't care about the dancing."

"Good, my feet are killing me."

Severus pulled one of the center chairs out, allowing Sirius to take a seat.

"Thanks, love."

Severus sat beside him despite Eileen's gesturing for them to come and greet the guests and thank them for coming.

Lily dropped into the seat beside Severus, grinning. On the other end, Regulus took a seat beside Sirius.

"Mister and Mister Prince-Black," she said. "How's that feel?"

"Pretty good," Sirius said.

"I think we're going to hold off hyphenating right now," Severus said. "The confusion would be insane. What if they accidentally give me Sirius' grade?"

Sirius snorted. "And they, what? Give me yours? I think they know the difference between our handwriting, Sev."

Severus shrugged. "You never know."

Regulus snorted. "How do you think they manage with siblings, then? Particularly twins in the same house? If the staff can't handle that, then yeah, don't hyphenate. But since they seem to manage passably well, I think your grades are safe, Sev."

"All right, I feel a bit better about it now," Severus said, chuckling.

Eileen approached the table. "Everything all right?"

"Feet hurt!" Sirius declared.

"And you're not even in heels," Eileen said.

"No, but I am pregnant, so I have all reason to keep seated."

"And I'm being a supportive husband," Severus added. "So shush."

Eileen burst into cackling laughter, as if they had told a riotous joke. Once she had regained composure, she exhaled heavily.

"All right. We'll switch it around and eat before you thank the guests for coming and having your first dance as a married couple."

"Sounds good," Severus said.

"I second that," Sirius added.

“I third,” Lily said.

“I fourth,” Regulus declared.

Eileen shook her head, smiling in a way that suggested she was trying not to laugh again. She left them to tell Dumbledore the change.

Sirius kicked off his shoes and groaned happily.

“Okay, there?” Lily asked.

“Took off my shoes.”

“That’s a yes,” Severus translated.

~May 1976~

Sirius laid on the grass as James played with the snitch he’d knicked from the storage closet.

“Bored,” Sirius groaned.

“You can read,” Remus said.

“Don’t wanna. We just finished an OWL test, Moony. Fuck reading.”

James pocketed the snitch and stood, stretching.

“Sev’s coming.”

Sirius sat up, eyes following Severus.

He’d settled by another tree, book in hand and quill tucked behind his ear.

His heart beat madly as he stared at him.

Severus never once glanced their way.

“Not paying attention to you again?” James asked, glancing the same way.

“No.”

James grinned. “I’ve an idea. It’s risky but he’ll pay attention to you.”

Sirius swallowed, staring at Severus a bit.

“What’d you have in mind?”

James whispered in his ear.

Sirius swallowed again, throat going dry at the idea. “Go on.”

“What are you planning?” Remus asked, frowning at them.

“Nothing we haven’t done before,” James promised, grinning.

“You know, the more you tease him –”

“Oh, stuff it, Moony,” Sirius said. “It’s hot. Sev will understand.”

~February 1977~

Sirius collapsed on the couch, grinning as he kicked his shoes off once again.

“And I don’t have to put them on again till Monday,” he said happily.

Severus lifted his legs and sat down, pulling off the socks.

“Ew. My feet smell.”

“Don’t care,” Severus said, pressing his fingers into the soles of Sirius’ left foot. “After all that we’ve gone through today, I think you deserve a foot massage and more.”

“More?”

“Of course!” Severus said. “Can’t end the day without consummating our marriage, yeah?” Sirius arched a brow. “Unless you don’t want to.”

“I don’t think I’ll ever not want to,” he said.

Sirius glanced away from Severus to stare at his belly, frowning.

Severus took Sirius’ hand in his own.

“I love you,” he said. “I don’t care what you look like. You’re pregnant, Siri. You’re going to gain weight. There’s nothing to be self-conscious or embarrassed about. And one day, we’ll likely be old men. You think I’m going to care what you look like then?”

Severus leaned down and kissed the swell of Sirius’ abdomen. He let go of Sirius’ hand so to focus on removing the robes and suit covering him.

With each bit of skin exposed, Severus kissed Sirius’ belly.

Sirius looked away, not sure how he felt watching Severus kiss his stomach.

He gasped when Severus dipped the tip of his tongue into his navel while tugging the trousers and pants down.

Only then did he look and watch Severus.

Severus’ eyes gleamed with mirth as he dipped his head down. Sirius groaned as Severus placed kisses along the length of his cock, and pushed a finger inside.

He surrendered, running his fingers through Severus’ hair as he watched him close his lips around the head of Sirius’ cock and sucked gently.

Severus’ added another finger and crooked his fingers. Sirius gasped at the sudden pressure inside him. He groaned, dipping his head back.

“Fuck,” Sirius hissed.

The two fingers became three, sliding in and out with ease as Sirius’ arousal built.

Severus hummed, lips vibrating around Sirius’ cock.

Sirius cursed, pulling Severus' hair.

Severus pulled free, releasing Sirius with an audible *pop*.

He gripped Sirius' wrists and pinned them above his head.

"Keep them here," he growled.

Sirius swallowed and nodded.

Severus' grin was feral as he joined their bodies, digging his fingers into Sirius' hips. Sirius locked his legs around Severus.

"Cheeky," Severus said, rocking his hips.

Sirius smirked and tightened his grip. "Fuck me properly, Sev."

Severus snorted and shoved his cock deeper. Sirius gasped, arching his back, hissing encouragement as their orgasms built in tandem with each gentle pull of his cock.

He clawed at the armrest, knuckles turning bone white.

Giving into the need to touch Severus, Sirius reached out and pulled Severus into a kiss.

Severus groaned and nipped Sirius' lower lip and Sirius tipped over the edge. His eyes rolled and he tilted his head back. Severus kissed Sirius' throat and moaned, coming inside Sirius.

They focused on gaining their breath before untangling. Sirius felt fluid drip down between his legs onto the couch. They'd need to clean that sooner or later, but for now he kissed his husband.

Husband!

After nearly ten years, at last!

"What's so funny?" Severus asked.

"Nothing," Sirius said. "Just happy."

Chapter End Notes

https://www.ancient-literature.com/greece_homer_iliad.html

<https://www.documentsanddesigns.com/vows-and-verses/celtic-wedding-vows-and-celtic-blessings/>

EPILOGUE

~May 10th, 1977~

Sirius glared at anyone who so much as looked at him funny. Every fiber of his being hurt as he waddled from class to class. It must've looked like waddling. It certainly felt like waddling.

Casey squirmed around inside him, feeling his agitation.

Sirius rubbed his belly, trying to soothe her as best he could.

"All right, Pads?" James asked, joining him.

"Yeah...hold on a mo'," he stopped and entered the bathroom. James followed behind him. "Mate, I'm using the loo. I don't need you here for that."

"Sorry, Pads," he said. "Healer's orders."

Sirius groaned his annoyance and entered a stall instead. He shut the door and pushed his trousers down to sit.

His lower abdomen lurched and he gasped.

"Okay, Padfoot?"

"Yeah, I think so." He leaned over to grab toilet paper and felt a splash drench his lower body and the bowl. "James."

"Yeah?"

"I think my water broke."

Silence.

"James?"

"Right! Hold on, I'm going to get Madam Pomfrey."

"Don't fucking leave me alone right now!"

"You won't be! Oi! You! Firstie!" His voice seemed to echo as he ran out of the bathroom.

Sirius groaned. He wanted to stand and pull his pants back up, but not one appendage obeyed. His arms and legs seemed to become jelly, shaking.

He gave up hope of getting up at all and hoped he wouldn't end up giving birth in the bathroom. That would be rather unfortunate and unhygienic.

He heard the door to the bathroom slam open.

"Sent a firstie to get a teacher," James said.

"Thanks," Sirius groaned. The contraction hit him like a Cruciatus curse and he gasped. "Oh, OW!"

“Padfoot?”

“Shit!” Sirius replied. “I think I’ve got contractions.”

“Of course you’ve got contractions!” James shouted shrilly. “Fuck! What do I do?”

“Get. Severus!”

He heard the door bang open and shut again as James raced out in his own panic. Then a third time on his return.

“What about not leaving you alone?”

“JUST GET SEVERUS!!!”

The door banging once more was starting to aggravate his frazzling nerves.

He clawed at the cubicle walls as another contraction came over him. They weren’t too close together, so he knew that he couldn’t be very dilated yet, but even so...

#

Severus nearly slipped running after James.

He had found him in the middle of one of his exams, but as soon as he announced that Casey was coming, Severus had jumped out of his seat, leaving his bag behind, and chased after him.

They stopped at the bathroom first, but Sirius had already been retrieved and escorted to the hospital wing. Cursing, Severus nearly sprained his ankle in rushing there, fast on James’ heels.

Once they arrived, Professor McGonagall took James by the arm

“Potter, guard the door. Prince, go to your husband.”

A litany of curses echoed around the wing and Severus froze, suddenly unsure. McGonagall pushed him forward and dragged James out, shouting at anyone who dared approach.

He approached the bed and winced. Severus was drenched in sweat and his eyes were tightly shut.

“Fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck!!!” he hissed. He gasped as another contraction overcame him. “If I ever agree to have another kid, remind me how painful it is!” he wept.

Severus took one of Sirius’ hands, tightly clenched in fist, and kissed it. “I will,” he promised.

“You’re nearly twenty centimeters, Sirius,” Madam Pomfrey said, “Just a couple more to go.”

Sirius sobbed, clenching Severus’ hand tightly. Severus tried not to cry himself given how tightly his hand was held. He thought that Sirius might break it from the sheer grip alone.

Madam Pomfrey checked again. “All right, Sirius. On the count of three, push.”

“Fuck you!”

Severus glanced at Madam Pomfrey, but she didn’t seem to care that Sirius insulted her.

“One, two, push.”

Sirius strained, groaning. Severus helped as best he can, though he could only offer moral support. He held Sirius up, supporting him with his arm around his shoulders.

“Good,” Madam Pomfrey said, allowing him to stop. Sirius gasped, weeping.

“Isn’t there a pain-reducing spell for this?”

“I cast it as soon as he came in.”

Severus looked at Sirius, who nodded.

“It’s bad, but it’s not cruciatus level anymore,” he assured him.

“Think you can try again?” she asked. Sirius nodded, still fighting the pain. Madam Pomfrey gave the command again and he started straining, grunting. “I see the crown! Keep going!”

Sirius sucked in short breaths. Then his gaze went blank.

A vision?

When Madam Pomfrey declared, “She’s out,” Sirius sucked in air, blinking. He loosened his grip around Severus’ hand as they heard the wails of a baby taking her first breaths. A couple minutes more pass before Madam Pomfrey handed Casey over to Sirius.

She was a tiny thing, skin red as blood and oxygen circulated. Her eyes were shut and her brow wrinkled as she cried. Wisps of black hair covered her head.

Sirius’ arms shook as he held her, a finger tracing the curve of one soft cheek.

“She’s going to be okay,” he said. “She’s strong.”

Was that what he saw? Severus dared not ask. He was speechless, unable to take his eyes off their baby daughter. For a brief moment, she opened her eyes and they met Severus’. They were blue, of course. A baby’s eyes didn’t develop their natural color till they were a little older.

He hoped they’d stay blue, like Sirius’ eyes.

They only remained open for a second or two before shutting again.

Sirius nudged Severus. “Gonna pass out. Go introduce her to the others.”

Severus obliged, relieving Sirius of Casey and held her close to his chest. He didn’t want to show her off just yet. For now, he only wanted to watch her though she was doing absolutely nothing save whine at the chill.

“Here,” Madam Pomfrey led him aside so that Sirius could rest as she showed hi how to swaddle her with a quick spell. Casey still fused, but the amount of whining lessened once she was wrapped tightly in a blanket. Severus picked her back up.

“I know that Casey is the name you gave her, but what is her full name?” Madam Pomfrey asked. “Need to get her registered and all.”

Severus cleared his throat. “Cassandra Nicole Prince-Black,” he said. “Um...is there anything else you need to do before I introduce her to everyone else?”

“Not immediately,” Madam Pomfrey assured him. “Go on. I’ll let you know when it’s time to

check on her.” He thanked her and approached the door.

Severus glanced back at Sirius, who still slept deeply, mumbling as Madam Pomfrey ran diagnostics.

He cradled Casey in one arm and opened the door.

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